

# THE FORTNIGHTLY

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## THE NEW CALL UPON THE LAND

BY SIR A. DANIEL HALL

FOR some years before the war men were pressing upon the Government the necessity of making preparations to secure a greater output of food from the soil of the country, as an insurance against the growing threat of war. It was evident that farming was even less able to supply the population with food than it had been in 1914, since which time the arable land had lost two and a half million acres (17 per cent.) and the number of workers employed upon the land had diminished by from three to four hundred thousand, about one third of their earlier total. To a large degree the loss of cultivated land had been balanced by improved production; Mr. Beilby for instance calculates that the 'true' output of food from England and Wales had changed little between 1910-14 and 1937, meaning by 'true' output the crops for human food together with the livestock reared and fed from home-grown food, all measured in calories. Taking Great Britain as a whole the true output of food, excluding that manufactured from imported feeding stuffs, amounted to little more than one third of the total consumption.

It was the reduced area of arable land and of the skilled workers that would leave us in a worse position than in 1914 if any rapid expansion of production was to be called for, though the increase in the number and efficiency of tractors would make the restoration of the plough land much easier. The disturbing feature was however the great amount of neglected and underfarmed grass land that had become more manifest since the last war. The good farmers were doing better but there was far too much land in the hands of men who for one reason or another had been unable to cope with the difficult conditions of post-war farming. It was the land in their occupation that had to be dealt with in a different fashion if domestic agriculture was to pull its weight in feeding the population. It is often maintained that in its grass land Great Britain possesses a great reserve of fertility that can be realized in an emergency. That is true of good grass land, it is particularly true of temporary grass that has been well farmed regularly under the plough, indeed the basis of the alternate husbandry, which has been for many farmers the secret of success during recent years,



lies in the accumulation of humus and the recovery of texture that follows three or four years of a suitable mixture of grass and clover. But the accumulated fertility of a neglected pasture, however many years it may have been in grass, is almost negative; it may take a couple of years to get the soil into a decent tilth; wire worm will take a heavy toll of the first and even the second crop.

It was these considerations that led to a demand for action before the war emergency had been declared; the farming unit of time is a year, crops cannot be improvised but must be prepared for. However, the Government of the day declined to take action, it contented itself with certain measures to encourage the farmers and to give them better prices. The Minister of Agriculture of the time declared it would be absurd to disturb the ordinary course of farming in order to prepare for a war that might never happen. Behind this excuse there was a more cogent reason—agriculture had no place in the country's accepted defence policy. It was expected that the Navy and the Mercantile Marine would be able to maintain the volume of imports, if not up to pre-war level at least up to a sufficiency to keep the population in full working capacity, provided that home agriculture continued to make its normal contribution to the national dietary. To tide over the inevitable disturbances created by war it was desirable to store a good reserve of wheat and other non-perishable foods, a stock for example that at a pinch would carry the country through to the next harvest. And this in fact has been the policy acted upon; nothing special was asked from the farmers, stocks were laid in though it may not always have been realized what would be wanted.

This is no time for recrimination nor to argue whether the military authorities were justified in their conclusion that domestic agriculture could be left out of account in the defence programme; it is not however beside the point to enquire if there were not other reasons which prompted statesmen to accept this negative policy for our own land. In the first place the people of importance in this country—Members of Parliament, business men, the press, the learned professions—had ceased to have any knowledge of, or interest in, farming. We have become an urban community which has lost its contact with the land; less than ten per cent. of our working population are connected with agriculture and they are scattered, with little influence on public opinion. There is a great sentimental interest in the countryside, a nostalgia for the old customs, and revivals that embraced interests as varied as old farm waggons and folk song, but little economic consideration of the part agriculture might play in the national system. Rich men bought country estates with a home farm from which it was a social convention to exhibit pedigree stock at agricultural shows,



but the financial results convinced them that farming was not a worthwhile business. The industrialists had a very telling argument against the revival of British agriculture. Not only had we money out on loan in the Dominions and other foreign countries but we had also to sell our manufactured goods, and payments could only be made in food products; therefore we must not contract the market we offered for wheat and meat, bacon and butter, by increasing the home production of such commodities.

Moreover the proposals for putting agriculture on a better footing would involve considerable disturbance of the traditional organization of the countryside. They demanded some form of compulsion or control of the land, even nationalization; they were tainted with socialism and threatened interference with most sacred kind of property—the land. The policies that had received daylight would be resented, not only by farmers but by the whole landed interest and by the business world that sees with the same eyes. It was easier, even if a little costly, to make the farmers' position comfortable by duties, quotas and subsidies, for by so doing both politicians and the man in the street considered that agriculture was being helped. Few people ask themselves whether the welfare of agriculture may not be something different from the prosperity of the current generation of farmers, whether the very help that is being accorded may not be the means of perpetuating a worn-out method and preventing the reorganization of the industry to meet modern conditions. A hundred years ago subsidies might have safeguarded the handloom weavers and prevented or delayed the advent of the cloth factories.

Such was our policy when the war fell upon us, and for the first nine months, at any rate, no different action was thought necessary. Farmers were encouraged to put more land under the plough and responded very well by breaking up nearly two million acres of grass land, thus restoring the arable area almost to that of 1914. But they were left to grow what they liked, the more so as the weather conditions for both autumn and spring sowing were exceptionally bad, so that the additional yield of human food from this newly ploughed area is not going to be considerable, though of course the land is on its way to better results in 1941. The then Minister of Agriculture disclaimed any intention of interfering with the discretion of farmers in the use to which they put their land and it was very generally agreed that the extra arable should be devoted to growing fodder crops in order to replace the inevitable shortage of imported feeding stuffs.

Now it must be agreed that farmers as a body could not be expected to do more than they have done; they have willingly responded to the call made upon them, there has been none of the



opposition to ploughing grass land that was so strongly manifested in the food production campaign of the last war, indeed many of them have asked for a more active policy. On the whole the farmers have accomplished pretty well as much as can be secured by their voluntary effort as individuals working upon their ordinary lines, with the encouragement afforded by good prices for their produce. Their effort was limited by the scarcity of labour, for in many cases the farms were already understaffed and in the early months of the war a good many men were tempted away from farming by the high wages even unskilled labourers could obtain on constructional work. Nevertheless the farmers were likely to be able to carry out the share of the defence policy that had been assigned to them—to maintain their accustomed output of food, about one third of the total requirements of the population.

But now the question presses upon us of whether this programme will be adequate to the situation that has suddenly developed in the field of war. Now that Italy has become an active enemy and the Axis powers have at their disposal nearly the whole of the European Atlantic seaboard we must expect a far severer attempt at blockade, and though we may be confident of eventually clearing the seas of raiders and submarines, it is but common forethought to prepare to depend in the main upon our own resources, if only for such a period as from one harvest to the next. There will always be people in the country ready to make peace under any conditions should the tide of war be running heavily against us, and what better excuse could such traitors have than the threat of imminent famine, if it becomes thought that we can do so little to maintain ourselves from our own land.

The new Government has therefore had to throw over the old policy of entire dependence upon being able to keep the seas open, and to prepare for a new kind of effort to obtain food from our own soil. The question is how much can be done, what prospect have we of producing even a maintenance ration within Great Britain? Of course under normal conditions of farming and dietary the internal production only amounted to a little more than a third of the consumption and on the old lines we are not likely to be able to raise that proportion to more than a half, the limitation being the amount of land available. But then a great deal of the output of British agriculture consisted of livestock products which, other than milk, become somewhat of a luxury when meeting a state of siege. It is a commonplace of agricultural science that the production of meat is a wasteful process; the animal consumes vegetable food containing from five to ten times as many calories as the meat that results. In so far as the vegetable food consists of grass and other rough fodder unavailable for human food, no



loss is involved, but the land that grew the grass or fodder crops might be put to grow wheat or barley or potatoes, and then the output of human food from that land would be multiplied five to ten times, according to the animal fed and the crop grown. Under our conditions an acre of potatoes produces the maximum amount of food that can be obtained from that area of land. The war dietary must mean not only a lowering of the general level of consumption, a reduction which the population other than the heavy manual workers could afford, but it involves a shift towards vegetarianism. The preparation for a state of siege then necessitates that as much as possible of our land shall be devoted to crops directly available as human food, i.e., to cereals, potatoes and vegetables, and at the same time that the general population shall be taught how to manage on such a diet. A recent estimate made out that, for the years 1935-7, of the crops harvested in England and Wales only 22 per cent. went to human food and 78 per cent. to cattle fodder, which when converted into meat and milk was only equivalent in value to five-eighths of the human food grown, i.e., to 14 per cent of the initial gross output of calories from the cultivated land other than pasture. It is thus evident that even on the present basis of farming we were not realizing one half of the absolute human food that might be obtained if we put the land to grow only human food crops. That of course is not possible; if only to keep up the milk supply some fodder crops will have to be grown; therefore to obtain our basic requirements we must also prepare to put a much larger acreage under the plough, to double at least the area that farmers have already broken up.

As to the fate of the livestock thus curtailed of their rations, we have to recognize that in so far as a state of siege becomes established we shall have to eat our flocks and herds, fortunate that we have in the country such a capital reserve against starvation. Farmers have already been warned that the numbers of pigs and poultry, which in normal times are mainly fed upon imported grain, will have to be reduced to perhaps a third of their numbers, but beef cattle and sheep will have heavy inroads made upon them and will have to live upon grass alone. Towards the close of the last war we were only saved from compulsory killing of livestock by the Armistice, we can hardly hope to get off with less severe pressure this time. But by suitable organization and control the fine pedigree stocks can be preserved against the time when regeneration can begin.

This then is the first step in the preparations to meet the threat of famine—to instruct farmers what crops they have to grow upon their arable land, thus to obtain a maximum output of cereals and potatoes.



But even this will not be adequate; we have to increase not only the area under the plough but that of good farming; the great extent of neglected or at least underfarmed land, on the existence of which all observers agree, has got to be attacked. Again all observers familiar with the countryside agree that the task cannot be left to the present occupiers of such land. Some of them are old, some ignorant, some lack energy, others lack capital; the farm itself may be too small, too badly laid out to be capable of arable cultivation. It can only become productive if it is made part of a larger exploitation that will throw the little fields into big ones, rectify the drainage, and fit the land for machine cultivation. When the Government needs more aeroplanes or more guns it either builds a factory itself or finds a manufacturer capable of directing the enterprise and enables him to obtain the capital needed for the business. So the Government must deal with this underfarmed and undeveloped land; it must group it into workable units and entrust it to men equal to managing it on big business lines for the one purpose that matters—the production of human food. There are such men in farming, men known in their own districts for their capacity, men whose output is at present limited by the small acreage of the farms they occupy. The Government had better use its powers and buy the land outright, otherwise it will find it impossible to get a return for the permanent improvements it will have to effect, and it may have to pay compensation for the alterations it makes, even if they are to the betterment of the land. How far this work can be entrusted to the County War Agricultural Committees, how far it will have to be directed and controlled from headquarters cannot here be discussed, but it is evident that the Ministry will require a department staffed by some of the most driving practical farmers that can be recruited up and down the country. It is not a job for Civil Servants; the maxim ‘No Farming from Whitehall’ must be applied to persons rather than place. For this venture into big business requires more than merely taking over the land, it requires several subsidiary departments. A land army of workers will have to be enrolled and trained, not to make them all-round agricultural labourers but men capable of working in gangs at this or that special job—e.g., land improvement, cultivation or harvesting. The task is simplified in that the land taken over is required for crop growing only and during the campaign will carry no permanent livestock. The non-commissioned officers for this land army, itself recruited from sources like the unemployed, conscientious objectors or aliens, or others who cannot be employed in military or munitions work, can be found among the men displaced from small farms and from the staff and students of the Agricultural Colleges and Farm Institutes.



Another sub-department will have to secure and see that the best use is made of the machinery required, for most of this emergency farming will have to be done by power machines.

Fertilizers will call for another branch of importance; the public knows nothing of what fertilizers will be available, cut off as we now are from French Potash and North African Phosphates. The seed situation is also one of great difficulty, so largely were we in the habit of buying certain farm and vegetable seeds from abroad. A much larger supply is required of seed potatoes grown in those areas of Scotland and England in which virus infection is non-existent or light. In this task of feeding our people on an emergency ration grown at home potatoes must play a much larger part than hitherto; the output should be increased by at least fifty per cent.

The change in the military situation whereby the force of Germany is now directed wholly against this country, has thrust upon the new Minister of Agriculture a great task, that of getting out of our own soil not the third or so of our food to which we have been accustomed, but an iron ration that will enable our population to carry on with a minimum of imports.

The Ministry of Food has its complementary part to play in the organization of methods of distribution that will make the products of the land cheaply accessible to all classes, in the elimination of the policy of holding back supplies to keep up the price, and in the education of the people to make use of a dietary to which they have not been accustomed. But whether we are Civil Servants, farmers, manufacturers, or only members of the great consuming public, we have all to forget for the time being our attachment to the voluntary system and our dependence upon profit as the motive for action. The only motive that now counts is the preservation of our national liberties.

It may be late to begin this task of making our own land support us, but it is not too late if we accept the necessity and determine to meet it.

## THE FUTURE OF COLONIES

BY JULIAN S. HUXLEY

AS everybody knows, Germany has made her claim for restoration of her colonies a major plank in her programme and Italy ( and even Poland) has taken up the issue of the "have-nots" as against the "have" nations. This is a political question, envisaged within the framework of the present political organization of the world's greater powers in the form of sovereign nation-states. In so far as this organization continues, while at the same time some regions are politically and socially so backward that they cannot carry on as self-governing independent units, there will be colonial powers and colonial possessions, owners and owned, and the grievances of the "have-nots" will remain. But if we can organize the world, including the colonial areas, for economic stability and rising standards of life and living, this issue of the "haves" versus the "have-nots" will become quite unreal.

However, there are other and more fundamental issues posed by the existence of colonies. The world's conscience is beginning to grow a little uneasy as to the fact of one country "possessing" another.

The formal principle of trusteeship was proclaimed in 1919 for mandated territories, and the underlying idea is becoming increasingly manifest in the administration of non-mandated colonies. The divergent aims of different colonial powers in the territories under their control is bound to lead to trouble as the native populations grow more politically self-conscious. The very word *Africa* is unknown to millions of Africans: once the idea of Africa as a unitary region penetrates into their minds, a nationalist movement is bound to arise. To secure an ordered development of such a movement, it will be necessary to remove glaring differences in methods and aims of administration, such as exist today, say in contiguous French, British and Portuguese territories.

Then the Colonial Powers' competition for trade or strategic position, as exerted through their colonial possessions, is preventing the proper economic and social development of large regions as wholes and fragmenting them into unreal and relatively inefficient units.



But the most important point to bear in mind is the backwardness, economic, social and intellectual, of almost all colonial regions. It is because of this that these regions have been taken over as colonies by more advanced powers. This backwardness is a basic fact of the present phase of world history. But it is assuredly not a permanent characteristic, any more than was the backwardness of northern and western Europe in the time of the Roman Empire. To remedy this state of affairs is the most important step to be taken in dealing with the colonial regions. To remedy their economic backwardness is essential for world prosperity: and development must take place along the right social and political lines if it is to be peaceful and orderly and not interrupted by unrest and possible rebellion.

Meanwhile it is worth while interrupting the thread of our argument to set forth something of the present backwardness of colonies and what it means in terms of human standards. We shall see that the ecology of man is, by and large, still radically different in the tropics and the advanced temperate countries.

Let us first take some statistics, as cold figures are more telling than fine words. Infantile mortality is as good a subject as any to tell the story. In advanced countries like Sweden, this has been reduced to something near its possible limit, and only one baby in thirty-three dies before it reaches the age of a year. In England and Wales, infant mortality is nearly twice as high. But in tropical Africa, though exact figures are absent, it is clearly of a different order of magnitude. Nowhere does it seem to be lower than about one in five or six, one in three is a common figure, and in some regions half of all the babies born die before they reach the age of one.

Death-rates tell the same story. Almost everywhere in tropical colonies they range from 15 to 30 per 1,000, as contrasted with about 10 for the socially most advanced countries.

The experience of western countries shows all too plainly that low wages and poor conditions are the major cause of high general and infant mortality rates. Thus, within Britain, in a depressed area like Jarrow the infantile mortality rate is 114 per thousand, while in the prosperous area of Surrey it is only 41 per thousand.

Naturally, disease-rates are equally disproportionate in the tropics. To take one example, venereal disease affects up to 80 or even 90 per cent. of the inhabitants of large areas of Africa. Again, in addition to the diseases still prevalent in the temperate regions, such as tuberculosis, the tropics still harbour (and on a grand scale) others which have been more or less eradicated from advanced regions, like ordinary malaria, plague and yellow fever,



and still others like blackwater fever and sleeping sickness which have never occurred outside the tropics.

Naked-eye parasites are still an all but universal burden on the native of the tropics. A recent survey in East Africa showed that over 9 out of 10 natives were infested by parasitic worms, one individual quite frequently harbouring up to six kinds.

Thanks to the advance of physiology, we know now that malnutrition is much more widespread even in the most prosperous white nations than anyone would have thought possible a generation ago. But it appears to be even more widespread in the tropics. Traditional tribal diets are often deficient or unbalanced, as Orr and Gilks showed with the Kikuyu and even the athletic Masai. Primitive methods of agriculture or traditional tabus may be responsible for monotonous and insufficient diet. Essential mineral salts are frequently scarce in the interior of the tropical continents. Many travellers have commented on the fact that African children will often prefer salt to sugar or sweets—a sign of serious physiological shortage.

The “lazy nigger” is proverbial among white men in the tropics. There is, however, no question that much, probably most, of his laziness is physiological. Mosquito nets against malaria, boots or other measures against hookworm, a reasonable minimum of sanitation, and a balanced and sufficient dietary—these would transform the inhabitants of the tropics as if by magic into a different quality of human beings.

The environment is equally backward. Here and there, as in Java, laborious terracing has conserved fertility: but in many regions shifting cultivation and over-grazing have resulted in soil erosion as bad as anything to be seen in the world. Locusts continue to plague the tropical cultivator as badly as they plagued Egypt 3,000 years ago. Over thousands of square miles in Africa the tsetse-fly, not man, is king, making it impossible for the cattle-keeping native tribes to live there.

We are so used to a money economy that we find it difficult to conceive of life wholly or mainly on a subsistence basis. Yet that is the condition in perhaps half the colonial areas. Where cash crops have been planted, agriculture is too often on a one-crop basis. Then civilization has exposed the unfortunate native cultivator to the uncontrolled vagaries of the world market. To take but one example, Nigerians in 1939 had to produce nearly three times as much of their staple export crops as in 1928 to realize the same amount in cash. It is hard to explain to a primitive tribesman, whom you have encouraged to grow crops for market, that the produce which made him a tidy profit last year cannot be sold this year except at an actual loss.



The machinery of production is, in most cases, woefully undeveloped. Storage, transport and market facilities, water-storage—this necessary skeleton of an advanced economy—is still in a rudimentary state over much of the colonial world.

Civilization, impinging on the tropical native in various unregulated ways, has also too often upset his old standards and ways of life without putting anything adequate in their place. In some cases the dingy, discontented and disorganized black proletariat that has come into being, represents a regression, on any standard of ultimate human values, from the traditional tribal existence.

Education is one of the main agencies by which a satisfactory development could be assured to populations living at the tribal or early barbaric stage. There is no doubt of the ability of so-called primitive peoples to profit by education. Just as better diet and health measures would transform tropical man physically, so two generations of good education would transform him mentally.

The great colonial powers are agreed as to the vital need for more and better education; but in none of the tropical colonies can it be said that education is much more than embryonic. In many parts of Africa, as in Melanesia and New Guinea, a large proportion of the children—frequently 4 out of 5—never attend any school. Of those who go to school, a large proportion again—often the majority—never get beyond the missionary bush schools, where "Education" is usually confined to elementary religious instruction, hymn-singing, and the rudiments of reading. The latest figures from Kenya, for example, show that only 57,000 children, from a total native population of well over 3 millions, attend recognized elementary schools; and of these less than 4 per cent. proceed to the primary schools, and less than 1 per cent. receive any secondary education at all.

Thus, by and large the standard of living, in the purely economic sense, and the standards of health, of production, and of education, are on a quite different level in the world's colonies from those in advanced metropolitan countries. The inhabitants exist in a qualitatively different stage of human development.

With this background of human ecology, we are now in a better position to consider what ought to be done.

The real "colonial problem" concerns the tropical colonies. These fall into four main areas—two large and two small. Tropical Africa is the largest in area, the Malayan region (including Malaya, the East Indies (mainly Dutch), French Indo-China and New Guinea) the next; each has a population of about 100 millions, with Africa slightly in the lead. By contrast, the population of the other two colonial regions, the Caribbean and the Pacific, amounts jointly to less than 3 millions.



Internationalization is frequently advanced as a colonial panacea. But it is almost invariably put forward, one discovers, by men who have no experience of colonies at first hand, and are thinking in terms of the friction between the great powers over colonies instead of in terms of the colonies themselves. Whether we look at the question from an ethical standpoint or from one of material interest, the development of the native peoples must be the prime consideration—a development in the direction of eventual self-government on the one hand, towards a higher standard of life on the other.

Internationalization is in itself no guarantee against abuses. Once international administration has become efficient, it might just as well be used for exploiting the inhabitants of the tropics in the interests of their joint white masters as for aiding their steps on the road towards independence and a high standard of life.

What is quite certain is that it would at the outset be less efficient than most existing national systems of colonial government. The actual job of administration of a scattered and backward population in undeveloped tropical country is a very difficult task, even for a body of men bound together by common language and a common tradition. It would be hopeless for a heterogeneous staff. Administrative mistakes are in general more serious in backward areas: primitive peoples are apt, if they are discouraged or perplexed, to shed what they have learnt with disconcerting rapidity, and to revert to primitive types of behaviour, which no longer have the full sanction of tribal tradition to keep them in check.

Most important, perhaps, is the question of responsibility. It would be impossible in any brief period to build up a new central organization on an international basis which would be capable of handling the business of central administration efficiently. I am sure that the British Colonial office would feel it was betraying a trust if it were to hand over its responsibilities to an untried international body.

Loyalty is the reciprocal of responsibility. The loyalty of administrative staff to a tradition and to an organization is not something which can be produced out of a bag, overnight: it must grow and develop. Still more important is the loyalty and co-operation of the local inhabitants. They can comprehend a monarch or a nation much more concretely than they can a shadowy and disembodied international organization.

There are even stronger arguments against the view that the colonial problem can be wholly or partially solved by transferring some colonies, under Mandate or outright, to "have-not" nations. In the first place, this again is tackling the question from the wrong



end, from the point of view of the advanced powers instead of from that of the local inhabitants. In any case, human populations are not chattels to be bandied about as makeweights in the game of power politics. And any radical change in the methods of administration, such as would almost inevitably result from transfer to a new master, would have a most upsetting effect on primitive peoples.

Actually, it is possible to envisage an arrangement which in the long run would be more advantageous to all parties concerned, including the have-nots themselves, than any scheme of transfer within the obsolescent framework of national sovereignty and sovereign ownership of Colonies.

Let us see how this might be possible. In the first place, the abandonment of the idea of complete possession of colonies, in favour of the idea of trusteeship—trusteeship for the rest of the world as well as for the local inhabitants—should be symbolized by the extension of the Mandatory principle. The Mandate system has, in spite of limitations, achieved something real. It has had repercussions on the normal administrative practice of colonial powers: it is very hard to administer two contiguous territories in radically different ways, so that the idea of trusteeship tends to spill over into the colonies proper. In certain cases, it has prevented undesirable action. The French, for instance, have made one or two attempts to extend their general protectionist system into their Mandated territories; but this has always been successfully resisted by the Mandates Commission. Public opinion, both at Geneva and perhaps even more in the home Parliament, has helped in keeping Governments up to the mark.

Even if the main political structure of the League of Nations should be entirely remodelled after this war, or even dropped, it will be essential to keep its special-function organizations such as the Mandates Commission, which might well be given a status resembling that of the I.L.O. Even if it were impossible to give mandatory status to all colonies, it would be desirable to symbolize the principle of trusteeship in a more deliberate way, by securing that in each and every major colonial region, each colonial power there represented should place at least one representative area under Mandate.

At the moment, the Mandates Commission has no right to send a committee of enquiry into a Mandated Territory, however dissatisfied they may be with the report of the Mandatory Power on its trusteeship. This state of affairs should certainly be remedied. In addition, funds should be made available by which members of the Mandates Commission could visit the territories for which they have responsibility (I believe it to be a fact that some members

have never set foot in any tropical colonial area), and that regular visits should be not only a right but a duty of the Commission. Finally it is important that international public opinion on colonial questions should be stronger and better informed. A beginning could be made with this by instituting a good Public Relations Department. A Research Department is also urgently required.

But any work which the Mandates Commission could do only touches the fringe of the problem. Its core, as we have seen, is colonial backwardness, and it is becoming ever clearer that this cannot be tackled at an adequate rate in the watertight compartments of nationalism.

If any form of political and economic union is built up after the war in Europe, or in its Western fringe (which includes all the major Colonial powers), a Colonial Commission should certainly be established with its own staff of travelling advisers and experts, and a considerable sum of money at its disposal from whatever central fund was set up. It should have no executive authority, but by means of advice and grants-in-aid, could exercise considerable influence on policy and development. It should comprise some representatives of non-colonial powers.

These changes are mainly political in scope. More important in the long run, from the point of view both of the colonial peoples and of the rest of the world, are changes aimed at securing a more rapid but also a better-ordered economic and social development of the colonial territories. The essential problem is to canalize more capital into the development of these backward areas, and to do so in such a way that the social well-being and development of their peoples is not impaired. The British Colonial Development and Research Funds in their new guise are an important agency for realizing this aim. But they will need to be supplemented if the tempo of colonial development is to be speeded up to a reasonable level. One method, as just suggested, will be to make considerable grants from any central European Fund: Europe as a whole must learn to understand its responsibilities and its long-range self-interest in colonial affairs. In addition, the separate development funds of member colonial powers should obviously be made comparable in scale. A considerable proportion of such grants is needed, as the Colonial Office has recognized, for scientific research, pure and applied. In the tropics nature has not yet been tamed and understood as in temperate regions; the methods of agriculture, forestry or medicine are inevitably different. Thus research has if anything a wider scope there than at home.

Direct grants-in-aid of this sort constitute one method. But they are assuredly not sufficient. In one way the most important



single step which could be taken for the benefit of the tropical dependencies would be to set up world-wide Commodity Control schemes for raw materials and primary products, so designed that they were not solely or mainly in the hands of producer interests and operated with restrictionist aims, but were under international supervision with strong governmental representation, not confined to Governments of the producer countries, and perhaps also with unofficial consumer interests. This would first ensure a stabilized and slowly-increasing agricultural production for some time to come; and would secondly help to iron out the worst features of booms and slumps on the productive side, and see to it that violent changes in agricultural prices did not occur over short periods. This, more than anything else, would restore a sense of security to the native cultivator (as well as to agriculturists and producers of raw materials in other regions.)

Then to ensure rapid and properly directed development, there could be set up what might be called International Public Concerns for the exploitation of special products in backward regions. The financing of these would be international, and they would have to conform to a framework of regulations laid down by those responsible for Colonial Administration. What is more, they would not be run merely for private profit, but would turn back anything over and above a fixed (or sliding scale) return, into the further development of the local territory.

The success of such schemes as the Sudan Plantation Syndicates shows how native welfare can go hand in hand with efficient commercial exploitation when development is carefully planned. There is no reason why this kind of development should not be repeated all over the tropical world, though the precise organization will differ according to whether the main export product is a mineral like tin, a plantation crop, or a crop, like cocoa, in the hands of many small producers.

In addition to International Concerns for particular products or groups of products, however, it is most important that regional organizations should be set up to deal with the entire development of an area when there is no prospect of immediate commercial profit. The Tennessee Valley Authority (T.V.A.) has demonstrated the value of such Regional Development Agencies, in which every aspect of development is carefully planned in relation to every other, and health, soil conservation, and amenities are safeguarded as well as material development. Where such Regional Development Agencies are set up, the International Concerns devoted to commodity production would operate locally through their machinery.

Regional Development Agencies can take various forms. Where the local inhabitants are reasonably advanced, they can adopt the T.V.A. model, of an agency designed to work through existing administrative machinery; in more backward areas, they could be more of the Chartered Company type. They could be financed partly by private capital and partly by annual grants-in-aid: the latter would be used to service the capital raised, both interest and sinking fund, until the economic activities of the area can begin to provide a gradually increasing share in this service. Meanwhile, expenditure on such agencies represents a long-term investment on the part of the world to provide the capital equipment for a raised standard of life and therefore increased purchasing power.

In all such schemes for colonial development, three points need stressing. One is health, the second is education, and the third is the need for some measure of industrial development. What I have said above is sufficient evidence of the need for raising the level of health in the tropics. But neither this nor the raising of efficiency in agricultural and other work is at all possible without more and better education. It will be necessary to lay down that a much higher percentage shall be set aside for educational purposes.

One aspect of health policy which the official mind has hitherto refused to face is Birth Control. Even the recent enlightened West Indies Commission, though stressing the dangers and difficulties caused by over-population, does not mention the tabooed subject. Birth Control is already urgently needed in some regions such as Jamaica: within a generation or two it will have become urgent over much of Africa. What we need is a constructive population policy, a policy of family planning linked up with general health, in which birth control plays a part.

The colonial powers, under a partially internationalized scheme, would be able—would indeed be driven—to pool their ideas and experiences to a much greater extent than now. There seems no doubt, for instance, that the special health service operating in part of the Belgian Congo, and known as the FOREAMI (*Foundation Reine Elizabeth pour l'Assistance Médicale aux Indigènes*) provides a comprehensively-planned organization which could be copied with advantage in other territories. Again, the British experiment now being conducted in the arts and crafts department of Achimota College, in the Gold Coast, seems likely to be of material help in solving the grave problems caused by the catastrophic impact of white upon black culture. Native arts and crafts are being linked with European techniques and marketing facilities, and developed as a means of self-expression, not only during education, but also in economic affairs and in every day life. The Achimota experiment is succeeding in giving the native African



a sense of achievement, of pride in his country's cultural heritage of having something of value to contribute to the life of his own area and to the world. Proposals are now afoot for extending the scope of this experiment from the sphere of arts and crafts to that of native custom and social affairs in general. If this succeeds it may prove to be the basis on which "indirect rule" may grow into true political and social self-development.

As regards industry, two points arise. The first is that the world as a whole is suffering, and suffering severely, from agricultural over-population. So long as the land is asked to support too large a proportion of the population, so long will it fall far short of optimum productivity, and so long will its cultivators be doomed to a life of drudgery and poor returns, and exposed to intense suffering at each return of the trade cycle.

The second point is that the growth of industry in the colonies has been hampered by the hangover of old mercantilist ideas. Some years ago, for instance, a proposal to find a new outlet for Kenya sisal by establishing a local bag-factory was turned down on the ground that it would compete with industrial concerns in Britain. In the long run, however, the establishment of an internal market in the tropics is essential for their prosperity—and indirectly for the prosperity of all the metropolitan countries.

Whatever the precise organization, whatever the precise speed of development, the objectives and many of the methods of reaching them seems clear. We need the general adoption of the principle of trusteeship; a settled and publicly-enunciated policy of employing more trained natives, as a step in education for self-government; continued national responsibility for colonies, but combined with some super-national control through advice and the allocation of grants, and also with the admission of some nationals of other powers to the local colonial services. Most of all we need an all-round raising of the standard of life and living in colonial populations, which can only come by a simultaneous improvement in health, education, and economic facilities, and can only be brought about by the canalizing of investment into these backward areas of the world. This needs national and European grants-in-aid, and world participation in and financial contribution to schemes of Commodity Control, International Public Concerns for increasing the primary production of particular regions, and Regional Development Agencies. The dropping of the mercantilist view is overdue, and local industry and internal markets must be developed. Such colonial development will afford one of the most fruitful ways in which American capital could participate in post-war reconstruction. It will also within a comparatively short period make the quarrels of the "have" and "have-nots" look entirely obsolete. They only have meaning in

a world of nationalist rivalry and imperialist possession. If the world sets itself co-operatively to developing its backward colonial regions, the grievances of the "have-nots" will evaporate, and the "haves" will enjoy a greater advantage than through dog-in-manger exploitation.

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The conquest of three of the great colonial powers by Germany has clearly raised a host of new problems, some of them of the most urgent nature. But the underlying principles and needs remain the same, even if this or that detail of their application may need to be changed.



## THE FLIGHT FROM PARIS

BY PETER ROSE PULHAM

I SAW the last day of Paris: living there, I could not bring myself to leave until it had disappeared into the night. The Government had left and Paris been declared an open town; no newspapers and no news came through, and by Wednesday, June 12, almost every one had gone except those resigned to stay. On Thursday the shops put up their shutters one by one, many being nailed down, like a coffin lid; all motor cars had disappeared, all trains stopped, and the streets were deserted and more silent than in the hours before dawn. At noon I saw a cow crossing the *Place de la Concorde*, led and followed by a few black-clothed peasants. In the afternoon I went to the *Deux Magots*, the last café open in the *quartier St. Germain des Prés*, where, a week before, I had sat in the soft evening light looking across the square at the old grey church, talking to friends, and surrounded by acquaintances. Now there were only a few stragglers. Heavy gunfire in the distance mingled with a thunderstorm while rain brought down the smoke from the cannons and mottled our faces and hands with black. There was a general air of resignation and calm suicide. At seven o'clock the café shut its doors, and when we had drunk our last glass of champagne, no one threw his glass to the ground. We dined by candlelight, almost in silence, at the little Greek restaurant in the *rue St. Gregoire de Tours*. After dinner every one went home to bed; no one seemed to have anything more to say.

Early the next morning, Friday, June 14, I left on bicycle by the *porte d'Orléans*, several hours, as I now learn, after the Germans had entered by the city's northern gates.

After a clear run for several miles beyond Sceaux, past horse and mule drawn columns of army kitchen equipment, the road became entirely blocked by every imaginable sort of vehicle loaded with whole families and their belongings; old men and women pushing prams or dragging soap boxes loaded with old clothes and saucepans, bicycles wheeled down from the north with blankets and great loaves of bread; a negro pushing uphill a mirror panelled mahogany wardrobe on a wheelbarrow, an old *concierge* carrying an elaborate cage of canaries on her head, a plank on wheels, like an improvised see-saw, weighed down at each end by a row of small

children, and any number of such signs of eccentric ingenuity; now and then a lost dog ran against the exodus, making its way home alone, in a panic, to Paris.

Turning down a small side lane I made my way across country, following a lesser stream of refugees. Every half mile or so was a motor car abandoned by the road: some upside down in the ditch, others merely lacking petrol until later passer-by removed the wheels as spares.

At times I was able to buy, for a cigarette, several moments glance at a road map. Bread and water suddenly became rareties of primary importance and preoccupation; within a few miles of Paris almost anyone on the road would have given a bottle of brandy for a bottle of water, a *terriner de foie gras* for a loaf of bread. Money no longer had any value, an hour out of the city, and in the first fields I saw children searching for potatoes. I had brought with me enough *pain de seigle*, garlic sausage, chocolate, and wine to last me for two days. Many hours from Paris, in a small town occupied by the military I was able to get a once scorned and now longed for drink—*menthe à l'eau*.

I sat under the trees by the church and ate my lunch. Here again the refugees split into two streams, and again I followed the lesser.

At the next village, Marcoussis I think, the pump was working, making a trodden mud patch in the dry dusty square. One had forgotten that water and dust made mud. A little bistro was open, but had no drinks to serve except from a last bottle of some sickly and forgotten *apéritif*. Several of the soldiers sitting drinking had passed through England on their way back from Dunkirk; one pulled out a diary from which he read me a list of all that he had eaten and drunk—free, he insisted—and chanted the names of all the railway stations through which he had passed. Not one of them, however, knew where we now were, but suggested that, Orléans being bombed on the one hand, and Chartres on the other, it might be best to make between the two, by Châteaudun.

Most of the signposts had been destroyed or turned round, but one could usually guess the right road, and Toury seemed the next objective. After a while I turned again, the sun declining on my right, into the endless poppy sprinkled fields, silent but for the occasional cry of some small bird, or a grass-hopper, or an armed dispatch rider roaring past in a cloud of dust. At one of the farms an old woman was standing in the gateway; I asked for milk, and was given it in a big earthenware bowl. She was Polish, she told me, and had been a refugee herself once; the farm people had gone, it was their turn now; she was going to wait for the Germans.

At Toury, after passing more thousands of troops, I turned towards sundown into a field of little round haystacks, and, having



hollowed one out, lay down and covered myself with loose hay; drank a little red wine; ate some bread and sausage, and fell asleep with the soft sweet smell of hay round me and a calm sky above.

Several times in the night bombing and gun fire woke me out of a deep sleep, and each time I heard the continuous roar and rattle of armoured columns on the Orléans road.

Towards the anonymous hours, the night became colder, and before dawn I rose, restless and stiff; a stream of refugees rushing from the direction in which I intended to go, seemed a rather alarming sign. I wondered if the Germans were in front, and if so, whether any one was likely to tell me so. On looking back it seems to me that the advance must have been at about the speed of an ordinary man on a bicycle. I had travelled across France in a moving no-man's-land, somewhere between the advancing Germans and the retreating French.

However, I kept to my road, and turning west past Janville as the sun rose, found stone barrages already across the streets of Allâmes, and heavy tanks standing at strategic corners, their crews strolling about stretching their legs. The café was shut, but a kind housewife let me make coffee on her stove.

Towards Châteaudun the main road was barred by the military; the town had just been bombed, and the Germans expected at any moment. Endless files of farm carts and long hay wains were moving slowly across country and over the Southern horizon; in each one a black-clothed family of three or four generations, old woman, woman, girl and child, sat on the hay; chairs were slung on the side, at the back a crate of chickens or rabbits, and following behind, a dog, a goat, or a cow.

Taking a side turning in search of another bowl of milk I came to a prosperous looking farm. White and golden cows were browsing by the gate, rabbits and chickens running about the yard. A newly drawn pail of water stood by the well, a pitchfork stood erect in the hay—here at last was every sign of peace and normal life: but no human being was there. I was reminded, with a shiver, of the mystery of the *Marie-Celeste*. The cows came in when they saw me: I milked one: I cannot remember whether I had ever done so before or not. The milk was rich, frothy, and warm. In the garden behind the house were little carrots and green peas, onions, strawberries, and currants—no breakfast could have been better; I felt inclined to stay for the duration, but was woken from such a dream by the largest tank I have ever seen, which, lumbering across a field, seemed to follow me, as I had been afraid the bull would do. When I turned, it stopped in front of me, asked its whereabouts, or if I had seen any of its fellows; and finally went away, contented with a cigarette.

At Cloyes I found the inhabitants also on the point of leaving, another peaceful country town was turning into a feverish caravan before my eyes. Beds were being thrown out of a window on to the roof of a car below, blankets and bundles lay on the pavement, and tables and chairs stood in the middle of the street, but I was able to buy wine, biscuits, and sardines, before the last shop shut its doors.

After continuing several miles down the Vendôme road I heard what I took to be an aeroplane flying fairly low: stopping and looking up I saw that it was a formation of some fifteen planes flying high across the road. The noise of a German plane is unmistakeable even on first hearing; coarser and more raucous than our own. The spasmodic machine-gun rattle I took to be engine trouble, not imagining any danger from such a distance; but seeing other people take cover in the ditches, I stood to "leeward" of a large tree. A few seconds later a bomb fell in a field some 500 yards away; then another, nearer, and on the road, and then another so near that I thought the next would go beyond me; and then a whistle coming towards me and such an explosion that I thought I must be deaf, and called aloud, "Am I deaf" and could just hear myself. At the same time machine-gun fire was lopping the top branches of the tree, and after a few seconds the road was littered with green leaves, as if it had been camouflaged. The bombers went on, circling and dive bombing over Cloyes. Great columns of brown smoke rose in the air.

The damage, compared with the noise and the alarming accuracy—or luck, of the sighting, seemed slight; a white draught horse killed, its skin torn as if it had been a stuffed canvas rocking horse; a lorry crushed and in flames, red and rusted, an unfamiliar kind of ruin.

Vendôme had been bombed several hours before I got there; a fine old town through which it seemed some plague had passed, for it was shut and deserted except for a handful of old men and women. A fire had started in an old wooden house at the corner of *La Grand Rue*, and by now the whole street was in flames, clouds of dust rising as masonry and plaster fell into the street. I was the sole spectator. A small girl was lying on the pavement: there is something unmistakeable about a corpse; the feet fall into an unnatural position. Near by was a woman covered with a muslin curtain, a dead horse still in harness and a dead dog, and everywhere, over everything, a glittering drift of shattered glass.

Crossing the stream on to a small square I stood looking at the gutted remains of what seemed to have been a warehouse; the street was covered with debris; not until I came to pick my way across did I realize that I was standing in the middle of a crowd of people



who had been alive that morning. Everything that one had imagined was there; a man with half his head blown off, one blue eye still open; a charred bundle, the ribs still recognizable, and one silk stockinged leg intact; a woman lying on her face, a scrap of paper with her name pinned to her back; a few separate hands and feet; and least expected of all, little bundles of men who had fallen as if pushed gently from behind, like sacks of potatoes, one on top of another. A small child looking on, asked me "Do you have any relations there?" "No!" "Some have." I was a good deal less upset than I expected; alas, one soon becomes accustomed to it all; war and destruction is monotonous, one ruin, one corpse is like another, fear and horror soon give way to boredom and indifference. A grocer's shop had been blown in and the owner killed; I went in, took a bottle of champagne, continued by the road to the river till I came to a troglodytic village, where I found a fine open barn, climbed to the top of the hay, ate, drank the wine and slept luxuriously till dawn.

When I woke, I remembered that it was Sunday, a pleasant day in France; but no church bells were ringing, and after a few minutes the hum, rattle and boom of the German planes began again: I got to Montoire, on the Loir just after they had passed, machine-gunning haphazard the main street; the people, woken so early, were already in flight. I asked a wooden-legged man the road, and he muttered disagreeably; I went on through the town and was leaning over the bridge admiring the river when a dishevelled man in rags, unshaven, but armed with a rifle, ran up and asked for my papers. He seemed relieved that I was English, explained that after all, German planes had just flown over, that I was not known in the town, and, it seemed, that my white linen jacket had somehow made people think of a parachute. He put me on my road and ran away.

Thence, towards Tours was the most depressing part of the whole journey. Baulked so far of my breakfast, I found the other refugees more squalid than usual; all the roads seemed to go uphill—going South, one could not help imagining, should be mainly freewheeling—and were dead straight, black, hot, sticky, dusty, and unsheltered.

At each tiringly reached village where a signpost announced the distance to Tours, a soldier would again send one off back into the maze, down some other long and anonymous road. Army lorries rushed past, the twigs of their camouflage brushing one into the ditch; on the back, through a cloud of dust one saw chalked the inevitable name "*Trompe la mort*" or "*Les privés d'amour*", and a mound of dirty soldiers sleeping one on top of another like a litter of pigs in a sty.

I was so bored that I had to set myself things to think about: how many times the wheel would have to go round before I reached Tours: how long it would take to drink dry one of the petrol lorries passing me, if the tank were full of wine; how many airs of Mozart I could recall. This was the only time I thought more of the past than of the future; ordinarily, as far as I can now remember, the exhilaration was such that I lived in the present, and dreamt projects of things that I would do when the war was over.

At last, in a village much like the others, all the refugees turned west, and, after giving my reasons, I was allowed on to the Tours road. Here at last I found breakfast, *apéritif*, and lunch: within reach of the city I washed in a little stream, lay down to pass the hot hours in the long grass of a quiet field, and was just dozing off to the faint buzz of a distant plane, when the most violent burst of gun fire all round, and the whistling of shells, brought me to my senses. I was on an airfield, in the middle of a whole battery of anti-aircraft guns. The plane, a long way away, disappeared over the horizon leaving a trail of smoke.

At Tours I had expected to find peace and civilization; I arrived during a bombardment, the bridge was being mined, and the town in half flight: but I dined in a restaurant, and slept in a bed.

Spiked on the railings of the *Mairie* were hundreds of letters, guarded by an armed sentry. They were the recognized and sole remaining means of communication, curiously medieval.

The next day I made a detour by Azay-le-rideau to Chinon, a town so charming that I sat late after dinner outside a café by the river, smoking and watching the anglers. Nothing could have been calmer, though distant explosions seemed to mean the blowing up of the bridges across the Loire. When the moon was already high, I took the road towards Richelieu; a slight mist hung over the meadows, the tops of trees silhouetted above it; a small local train puffed past, its smoke lit by the moon from above, and by the red glow of the furnace from below. At midnight I sat down by the roadside and made what seemed a clandestine supper of bread, garlic, and a light red wine of Touraine; then on for several hours and past a castle, great walls and turrets which I could hardly see for the rain clouds. I lay down under a honeysuckle hedge, and was woken at sunrise by a slight drizzle, cold but perfectly refreshed.

To Poitiers, by Lencloître, the journey was peaceful; through rolling country, over streams and rivers, past farmhouses and small turreted châteaux. By now a routine had been established; rising at dawn and stopping as early as I found a café open, for coffee and rum; washing at the village pump, buying hot bread as soon as the baker opened and going on to the next town, for a later breakfast



of wine and food: picknicking later in the shade of some small bridge, and sleeping at dusk in a great barn where the golden wide-horned oxen chewed the cud all night long. By then I was in the great wine country; a *vigneron* would give me coffee and home distilled *eau-de-vie* for breakfast, and a bottle of his own wine to take away for lunch. Mansle, Rochfaucauld, and Riberac were charming towns in the early morning. Once on a lonely road I came on a grotesque figure stumping along with an oak staff, muttering to himself; I remembered him as a mad philosopher who was once night-porter in an hotel I used to frequent in Paris. He reminded me that I had once said that the English would never fight again, unless for their roast beef. I left him on top of a hill and freewheeled away.

Towards Bordeaux there were lines of black troops with scarlet fez standing among the vines; when I got there, after a week on the road, I found it an open town, and the *Chapon Fin*, where I had hoped to dine, shut. I slept, dinnerless, on the ground, a suspicious sentry marching round me all night. In the morning a bus left for Bayonne and St. Jean-de-Luz; having sold my bicycle to a sailor in a café, I bought provisions, and went out on a sardine fishing boat to the waiting troopship. Here, in the galley, were enormous quantities of solid English food and cans of tea waiting to be taken down to the long, scrubbed wood mess-tables above which, at night, we slung our hammocks. Reassuring destroyers circled round us, and, although in sight of the Spanish coast, we seemed already to be back in England.

## THE GERMANY OF TOMORROW

BY ROBERT POWELL

SO unexpected have been some of the major developments in Europe during the past few months that few things are more dangerous than dealing in political or socio-economic futures, particularly an attempt to describe what may happen to that country which has for the time being taken the initiative throughout the continent.

Germany's future like that of Britain will depend not only upon the outcome of the war but also upon how and when it will end. At the moment, it is often maintained that the tremendous physical, economic, and moral efforts which we and the Germans are putting forth will leave us all so bankrupt that there can be no talk of victor and vanquished. Be that as it may, there can be no doubt in anyone's mind after what has happened in the states it has occupied that first European and then world domination by the Third Reich would be the measure of its victory, together with the complete wiping out of the liberal, democratic order everywhere. If defeated, this same Third Reich will be driven back upon itself and will again undergo another political upheaval similar to that which followed the World War, though this one will probably cut much more deeply into the whole social and economic structure of the country.

It might also be pointed out that whatever fate awaits Germany, whether it be military defeat or victory, certain fundamental trends in its development hitherto must inevitably lead to certain well-defined ends.

The Hitler Movement has undoubtedly revolutionized Germany, but it is very probable that, seen in its proper historical perspective, this event will prove to be merely an incident—though a very important one—in European history, as the first eruption of a volcano which had been smouldering everywhere throughout the continent for a long time past. It is quite clear by to-day that we are suffering not merely from the shock of the 1914-1918 catastrophe or the Treaty of Versailles, but that the Nazis' mad but carefully calculated outbursts against the European order are the consequence of the shock of the Industrial Revolution, of old



## THE GERMANY OF TOMORROW

injustices and distress which have to be removed before there can be any real peace.

As on a number of previous occasions in the past, the *Zeitgeist* has revealed itself most forcefully and uncontrolledly in Germany. That is understandable in view of the Reich's central position at the crossroads of Europe and even more so because, despite its size and importance, Germany still remains geographically, racially, and socially indeterminate. The absence of a fixed society and of stable political traditions revealed its great weakness and indecision after its illusions of military omnipotence had been laid low in 1918.

As vague and contradictory as its national character has been the National Socialism which has dominated it for the last eight years. Its so-called *Weltanschauung* was intended mainly for propaganda purposes. This was the flypaper with which to catch the masses. But for the leaders such doctrines had no importance. As Rauschning has pointed out, "No allegiance to any sort of philosophy brought membership of the actual élite, but the simple fact of having fought for the party's power"!\*

Like Fascism, Nazism would have been impossible without Bolshevism, yet it started and long maintained its appeal among the masses as a counter-revolution to Bolshevism, and then when this anti-Bolshevism had served its purpose, Nazism revealed openly—what had long been the case secretly—that its real aims were national expansion based upon the Nordic racial supremacy. The Socialism in National Socialism was the bait with which to win over the workers in a highly industrialized country; but once the masses were on their side, then Pan-German hegemony based upon Prussian militarism stood forth unblushingly. To understand the next stage after the Nazi revolution it is essential to remember that in this case it is less the programme than the tactics of the revolution which have to be guarded against. With the best will in the world it would be difficult to point to any great new ideas that the Nazis have to offer Europe. Even those people in this country who gave their tacit support to Nazism a few years ago could offer only a negative justification for their attitude, viz., that it prevented the westward movement of Bolshevism.

Nazism was and still is a negative movement. It is a revolution of *nihilism*; not merely of destruction but of nihilism in which not merely the will to destroy predominates, but also the justification for wanton destruction, since the Nazi believes in his heart "in the nothingness" of the spiritual and social values of the present-day European civilization and therefore has no hesitation in smashing

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\**Germany's Revolution of Destruction*, by Hormann Rauschning. (Heinemann, 1939.)

it to pieces, come what may afterwards.\* It would be interesting, but would take us too far afield, to show how this nihilism has been developed not merely out of Germany's post-1918 experiences but much more from the direct influence of such writers as Nietzsche and Spengler, whose writings greatly influenced the German higher middle class of an earlier generation. This "pessimism" is a basic element in the *Weltanschauung* which Hitler and his élite absorbed from, rather than gave to, their German followers from 1923 onwards.

In consequence, Nazism, when seen at its best, can only be interpreted as clearing the boards for a new system of values which must replace those still existing. One of Hitler's earliest co-operators, but who later quarrelled with him wrote prophetically in 1935 that this system "represents the (transient) Gironde epoch of the German Revolution, the interlude of revolutionary feelings and reactionary forms which arise spontaneously out of a progressive internal radicalization, and thereby (mostly by a detour into war) clears the ground for an epoch of revolutionary construction".†

Strong as must be our condemnation of the Nazis' quack remedy for the disease which crippled Germany, there is no doubt but that the time for either a drastic cure or even a surgical operation was ripe. The nihilism which enveloped the whole German outlook, showing itself in the years immediately before Hitler came to power in the "Entweder-Oder" philosophy could only have arisen because of the abandonment of political and to a lesser degree economic principles and institutions which had passed muster for decades but had been inwardly rejected by a large section of the population. Primarily it must be pointed out that parliamentary democracy (as understood in this country) never really caught on in Germany, neither under Bismarck, Wilhelm II., nor under the Weimar Republic. It was alien to Germany's earlier cosmopolitan political experiences and therefore failed miserably after the finacio-economic catastrophe of 1923-4. The Weimar Constitution gave the Reich in theory one of the fairest electoral systems, the greatest number of fundamental rights to its citizens and strongest control of the executive. But it did not work in practice, mainly because it had not the political leaders or political experience to run, in fact, in no small measure because the German Liberals who were mainly responsible for that constitution had lost faith in their Liberalism. Like Liberalism as a creed in other parts

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\*This nihilism has affected not merely Germany but the whole of European civilization. It is interesting in this connection to refer again to Nietzsche's "Will to Power", especially Book I, "European Nihilism", where even in the '80s he prophesied this nihilistic stage.

†*Die deutsche Bartholomäusnacht*, Reso-Verlag, Zurich, 1935.



of Europe, the German version of it failed to convert its philosophy into economic democracy with the result that economic depression and the accompanying toll of unemployment caused them to lose hope.

Since then the effects of the Nazi rule have made the former Liberals look upon the *status quo* as the basis of progress and to many of them such expedients as a return to the monarchy and to conservatism appear to hold the key to the post-Nazi régime. But that is much too narrow a view of things. A moment has arrived in German history (and in European, for that matter) when fundamental issues must be honestly faced and much more far-reaching changes introduced.

The Social Democrats also failed their followers, as did the trade unions—not so much in a lack of physical courage as in a failure to appreciate the trend of popular thought in the younger generation. In fact, looking back it is no exaggeration to say that despite the number of paper votes for the Communists and Social Democrats, Marxism was already well on the way to losing its influence as an effective national force when the Nazis seized power. One might even go further and add that the majority of the German Social Democrats in exile have failed to interpret aright what has happened in their own country.

As for the Roman Catholic Centre Party, it should not be forgotten that it held the key to the position in March, 1933, when Hitler demanded dictatorial powers and it was their leader who agreed to this request. By co-operation between this party and the other non-Nazi parties still left in the Reichstag, much might have been done to maintain a moderating influence over Nazi excesses. But the opportunity was missed and missed irretrievably.

The contemptuous hatred of so many Germans for the Reichstag as a “mere talking-shop centred around the word compromise” meant that they had no genuine regret when it ceased to function as a parliamentary institution. The younger Germans, instead of seeing the difference between Parliamentary government as an instrument for the attainment of a higher democracy and the parasitic growth which had covered it in their own country concentrated upon the latter, called it “Parliamentary Democracy” condemned it outright and demanded the abolition of the party system. It would be as logical to condemn political party government *per se* in this country because one knows that the choice of a parliamentary candidate too often depends upon other considerations than his ability to serve honestly and efficiently his country and constituency. To the young German of the post-war period, to whom action rather than deep thinking was the first consider-

ation, liberalism, parliamentarism, and democracy assumed very strange and warped meanings. Thus, Otto Strasser writes:\*

It is time to unveil the repulsive and gain-seeking falsehood of popular government which is an essential constituent of liberalism, which is disseminated by selfish groups of capitalists promulgated by internationals of all kinds, maintained by demagoguery that tickles the fancy of the masses, and contributes to securing for various obscure forces an influence and leadership that would be impossible in a better-managed state.

Fundamentally, however, one sees that this reaction is due to the German's different evaluation of certain human virtues from that of the British. Individual liberty means much less to him and rejecting the idea of all men being equal he cries, "away with the (pseudo) democratic principle of equality", and for it let there be substituted the doctrine of efficiency.

Parliament, he will tell you, is a luxury which a wealthy country like Britain can enjoy, but not a "poor Germany". More to the point is the fact that a "parliament of estates" based upon election by vocation or occupation appeals much more to his efficient mind. Whatever the outcome of this present war, but assuming that at the end of it, Germany will be allowed to decide upon its form of government, it is very probable that it will not return to the British model of parliamentary government, whatever else it may or may not do.

Whether the head of the post-war State shall be a hereditary monarch or a republican president does not bother the average German to-day. If the Holy Roman Empire of the Germans should be revived then he might see the necessity of and justification for an emperor, otherwise he will probably be content with a republican head, popularly elected and for life.

But the question which seems to concern most Britons when they think of Germany is not so much what will be its future political form, as what will the socio-economic form be. Will Germany become Bolshevik, has been a much discussed question for past years. The bogey of a Bolshevik Reich leading Europe away from the pleasant pastures of pseudo-capitalism has probably done more than anything else to bring Europe to its present position. The nightmare of the Soviets ideologically in Berlin has been to certain post-1932 British statesmen what Russia's presence in the Straits would have been to their forerunners of a century ago. This was unfortunate, not only because Hitler's pact with the Soviets last August demonstrated clearly that expediency rather than socio-economic doctrines was his guiding principle but also because a little deeper thought would have clearly indicated that in the midst of the great social revolution which is now passing

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\**Germany Tomorrow*, by Otto Strasser. Cape. 8s. 6d.



over the whole civilized world, the bogey of labels only hides the basic issues.

For just as the terms Capitalist and Socialist are almost out of date in our present complicated economic system with its combination of private enterprize, national and international trusts, state-controlled policy, etc., so Bolshevism and Nazism are changing the one into the other almost imperceptibly. It is not too much to say that the stage has now been reached when the shades of Germany's "brown Bolshevism" and Russia's "red Nazism" almost blend imperceptibly. These two systems have been built up upon such similar mass psychological bases and have chosen such similar short-cuts as a solution of their problems that Bolshevism can hardly be imagined as the alternative of Nazism for future Germany. These two systems are rivals offering the same kind of charm to their suitors—the masses—and it is not likely that when they tire of the one, these suitors will choose the other. Nazism may become out and out Bolshevism should Germany dominate Europe; but certainly *not* if it is defeated. For the loss of freedom, of tradition and of civilization, which the average German has not forgotten will be a prize he will strive for and guard more highly than ever before.

Running like a thread through the tangled skein of German development for the past 30 years has been the attempt to find a satisfactory socio-economic principle whereby to direct things. The attempt has been to fashion a German Socialism which will satisfy this need. Men like Walther Rathenau, and Max Weber might differ considerably in their conception of economic industrial matters, but even at that time, there was much common agreement on the ground that pure individualism had no place in the modern system of things, that "order out of chaos, co-ordinated progress within the State in the place of anarchy and internecine competition—these are the first articles in the German industrial and social creed".\* In more recent years Werner Sombart, the great historian of capitalism, has written a small book on this subject of German Socialism and the Nazi fumbblings in social experiment which were forced upon them by previous developments. German industrial organization is well built and strongly entrenched. The cartels and trusts still continue to exert a great influence despite Hitler's régime. In fact, while it is true that they have been compelled to fit into the Third Reich's scheme of rearmament and war, it is equally true to say the industrial structure of Germany remains very largely what it was before 1933, and the organizations which have for so long dictated price and production

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\**Republican Germany*, by Hugh Quigley and R. T. Clark. Methuen, 1928.

will again do so when Hitlerism has disappeared from the scene, unless checked by a new social policy at home. Nazism has not solved this great issue, it has merely postponed it.

In this connection, it is interesting to note that the breach between Hitler and Thyssen, while it brings comfort to German exiles as another step towards overthrown Nazism, does not help them in their view of the future socio-economic system of their fatherland. For they see Hitler and Thyssen as two wings of German imperialism, which drifted apart merely because the Ruhr industrialist was opposed to the German-Soviet Pact. Thyssen, appears to them as representative of a group which would co-operate with French and British (and maybe American) industrialists in order to wage war upon the Soviets and possibly to build up the "new European order", in which a European union of the Right would reduce Russia to submission.

Whether or not Herr Thyssen is thinking along these lines, it requires little imagination to see that such a European alliance under Herr Hitler's leadership, and with the German army as his instrument, might not be excluded from the Führer's future plans. But that is a matter for the further, though perhaps not very far distant, future. But the economic unification of the continent is to follow immediately after the military occupation. Germany to-day comes out boldly and declares that it "feels itself large, young and powerful enough to lead and to take full responsibility". In fact it goes further and asserts that it is laying the basis of a new Europe offering "new economic ideas and a tested economic system in which every State, agrarian or industrial, would take part on the basis of equality of rights".\*

It would be interesting to know what are these new tested economic ideas which the Nazis offer. The German gift of organization was already generally acknowledged long before Hitler came to power, and the New Europe is merely an extension of the idea of *Lebensraum*, which the Nazis have used as propaganda with such diabolical skill during the past few years. Yet this, in turn, is little more than a sequence of the pre-1914 Pan-German conception which began with the union of the Germans throughout this continent, and would then have dominated the other nations around them. This European leadership of the Reich is naturally, in the German view, an honour which the smaller nations should realize to be right and proper! They are to be fitted in to the Nazis' scheme of things. "It is completely reconcilable", recently wrote Karl Megerle, the vituperative, violently anti-British leader writer of the *Börsen Zeitung*, "with the honour of a small nation

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\*Statement from German Foreign Office spokesman, July 15, 1940.



to be under the protection and leadership of the Great German Reich". But if they do not see their honour in the same way, then there will always be the German military might to enforce it.

It is inconceivable that such an Europe based upon force can continue to exist for long. A continent consisting of French and Belgians, Dutch and Norwegians, Poles and Czechs with their traditions of liberty cannot be permanently administered by Herr Hitler and Heinrich Himmler any more than it could be by Napoleon and Fouché.

At the same time, it is of interest to note that, whereas the Nazi leader may be thinking in terms of conquest and hegemony, the German for all the peculiar mental twists and contortions of his makeup, also has a feeling for Europe. He closely identifies Germany with the rest of the continent, and when the free peoples are repairing the ravages of Nazism, this fact may contribute towards that European unity which is essential to further progress.

Certain features of the Nazi régime such as the leadership principle and the return to Teutonic heathenism will probably have a future value in inverse ratio to their present importance in the propaganda of the movement.

The Nazis have yet to show that they have a constructive programme to give Europe. They will—at a terrible price—have restored the much talked of "self-respect" of the German people which Versailles was alleged to have taken from them. But a new generation will probably consider it its greatest privilege to co-operate with the Europe which up to now it has either spurned or been prevented from getting to know. A prelude to such a development must, however, be some clearer, more honest thinking on the part of these Germans themselves—as anyone who has read Nazi literature during the past seven years must agree.

*(Mr. Robert Powell was for fourteen years a newspaper correspondent in Central Europe. From 1926 until 1932 he was in Prague and Vienna. From 1932 until the outbreak of war he was in Berlin.)*

## BRITAIN'S AIR DEFENCE

BY AIR-COMMODORE L. E. O. CHARLTON

**S**ELDOM has there been a more curious situation in the midst of general hostilities than the present one. One would have, in fact, to go back to Froissart's Chronicles to see any similarity between the present pause in grand operations and those long medieval lapses during which both sides circled at wide distances, and occasionally provoked a minor combat, but which were mostly occupied with re-equipment, winter stores and the question of a new plan of campaign. On the Continent an army, flushed with victory and numbering millions, fully equipped with the mightiest engines of war, and with the whole of manufacturing Europe at its beck and call, is brought to a sudden halt in its career of conquest by a belt of water narrower by far than the width of many rivers as they approach a confluence with the sea. In addition it has great air power to reinforce its strength and perform pin-pricking tactics while its leaders resolve on a future course of action. By sea, however, there is a different tale to tell, for the enemy's naval strength is badly crippled while that of ours remains supreme.

Here, in the British Isles, we are choc a bloc with troops which have undergone a process of re-equipment. For the moment, and for the first time in a generation, our military task is clear. It is to train hard, accumulate material and wait upon events, attuning itself, meanwhile, to the exigencies of a purely local defence. We are a kind of grand-scale Mafeking, closely beleaguered on our Continental front, but free to go and come, within limits, on all others; besieged but not surrounded and quite determined at all costs to foil invasion. The real question is, what form will that invasion take, and what will be its preparation? For Hitler cannot win the war until he brings us to our knees, a condition to which we are not to be reduced, thanks to sea and air power, unless he lands in great force on our coasts.

At this stage he can only touch us neatly by means of air bombardment, a method barren of considerable result without he directs his bombs, unfailingly and increasingly, on our aviation targets. Such are aerodromes, training establishments, aircraft depots and specific centres of output. If our fighter strength, for



instance, were seriously crippled the enemy bombers would only be opposed by fire from the ground, and could come inland, in large quantities and with considerable assurance, by day and night, to pick and choose objectives. Anti-aircraft fire, alone and unassisted, could not prevent such large-scale raiding. The A-A gunners would score a measure of success, but it is the Spitfire, the Hurricane and the Defiant, which really claw the enemy from the sky and assist to spread despondency throughout the Nazi Air Force as the pilots, on ever more numerous occasions, fail to return to their bases. In the opinion of Napoleon the moral is to the physical as three to one. But he spoke only of battle on the ground. In the air, where men are at peculiar tension and where there is no certain safety except in downright turning-tail, those odds may be considerably enhanced. It is therefore very well indeed that the Royal Air Force, since the beginning of the war, has persistently and unmistakably, asserted its superiority over the enemy in the air, not alone with equal forces at disposal but when outnumbered by as much as ten to one. Only by a slow process of deterioration, the result of a gradual change of flying personnel throughout the whole Air Force and the introduction of insufficiently trained newcomers, could our highly satisfactory moral balance be over-weighted on the other side. Frequent and intensive air fighting, over a prolonged period, might bring that condition about, but, on the other hand, the enemy would be losing air crews in much greater proportion all the time, in accordance with his present rate of loss.

Ever since, a month ago, the enemy adopted raiding on a heavier scale he has probably had in mind our aviation targets as a main objective. That raiding may appear to have been sporadic and objectlessly diffused, with very widely separated points of attack, but there is purpose in each one, if only for the reason that the Nazi High Command are not in the least likely to waste either material or opportunity. A pin-point picture of our air establishments is probably being built up, together with the best method of approach having regard to ground defences and the intensity of fire to be apprehended. This mosaic once completed it is likely that an air attack in force will be launched on some near night, having for its purpose the destruction of our air power, or its serious cripplement, in one fell swoop. If this should obtain success in Nazi eyes, whether or no in actual fact, then at last the enemy's preparation will be complete, and scattered attempts at invasion by sea and air will follow quickly after.

It is not difficult to conjecture the manner of these attempted landings. The chosen localities might be bombed intensively in an endeavour to paralyse the effort of the local defence, the expected absence of British fighters, excepting in minute quantity, permit-

ting of the operation without serious opposition from above. At about the same time the parachutist hordes may descend on the landward side of the coastal points selected for attack, instructed to hold up our reinforcing columns, to create confusion and alarm in their vicinity and, if need be, to take the defenders in the rear who have already been subjected to air bombardment. Finally the troop-carrying air transports, with light artillery, motor bicycles, and, possibly, some baby tanks or other caterpillar vehicles, may make landings at certain places indicated by the advanced parachute detachments, considerably to augment the enemy forces on the ground and by a great deal to increase their power of offence. Then will be the time for the sea-borne forces of the enemy, arriving in flat-bottomed barges or in whatever way they may, to draw inshore to seize, and hold fast, the selected coastal points, to form of them bridge-heads and from thence, continually reinforced, to proceed inland on converging lines towards the main objective which might well be London. Some such method of invasion is sure to be the enemy's, because the alternatives are few. There may be variations of the general programme as outlined above. There will be feints on places not intended for attack, and a widespread propaganda designed to make us turn our heads the other way. But in the main the enemy must adopt such tactics, for how else could he anticipate even a small measure of success? It is little likely, for instance, that he would attempt a parachute invasion unless all else were well in train, and, as a necessary preliminary, our air power crippled by a considered series of well-aimed air attacks. To do so would merely be to invite disaster, for what could ten thousand parachutists do with their light arms against our ordered measures of defence, unless secure in the knowledge that the forces of the Reich are close behind them? As soldiers the Nazi leaders are far too skilful and versed in war to commit a large percentage of highly-prized technical corps to certain destruction in the field.

So far our Metropolitan Bomber Force has not appeared in the foreground of this picture of invasion. At present it is being employed, in keeping with the orthodox school of thought, on bombing excursions over enemy territory, with the object of creating for itself a nuisance value to which the infliction of actual damage or destruction is ancillary. Many of these enterprizes are solely concerned with aerodrome attack, chiefly on landing grounds lately belonging to our late ally. The intention is obviously to reduce the immediately disposable air power of the enemy, and it is significant that such form of attack is very often accompanied by considerable loss, whether or no it may result in aircraft destruction on the ground. It is equally obvious, or so should be, that the loss



incurred is amply compensated by the damage done, for otherwise we would be the losers on exchange. But when the day of invasion dawns all this will naturally be changed, and the whole weight of our bomb salvos will be at once applied to make impossible the landing of the enemy's sea-borne troops and heavy armoured vehicles. On that day we will be glad to have conserved our bomber strength, and not, for the mere sake of bombing, to have in some measure dissipated it on enterprizes, such as oil and munition depots, the destruction of which can only be of long term advantage to our cause. We are in face of an emergency threatening to the safety of the British Isles, and our Air Chiefs in their discretion, even though against appearance, are sure to be ordering a minimum of long range flight in order to conserve our bomber strength to repel invasion. On their shoulders rests a vast responsibility, for it will be air power in the long run that will, as much or even more than sea power, secure us while our troops re-arm to carry the offensive towards the enemy.

It would appear therefore, unless this article has been aimed far wide of the mark, that we have most to apprehend from an intensive bombardment, over a short period, of our aviation targets, with a special emphasis on aerodromes. In the past we were not greatly concerned to establish our flying-fields on sites selected for their adaptability to camouflage, and neither, in the main, did we depart from one standard lay-out for the lot. They are to be found in the vicinity of large towns, while sometimes main roadways mark their boundaries. On the whole it can be said that they are not very difficult of identification on a proper night, and that determined enemy bombers can arrive overhead on pre-ordained lines of flight. For that reason they are sure to be particularly well-defended from the ground, for the bomb-aimer, however bright the moon, who has to keep high altitude is hard put to it to ensure a hit. In this connection we are apt to suffer from another disadvantage, owing to the fact that our dispositions were taken when the enemy's approach was only to be expected from the east. Now that he has unfortunately possessed himself of the whole littoral of France he can come from west and south as well, and whereas an air force while in flight has neither front, nor flanks, nor rear, the same cannot be said of its locations on the ground. In a sense our position has been turned and our pre-arranged defensive lines put in disorder. The remedy has doubtless already been adopted, and our dispositions re-arranged to meet attack from several quarters instead of one. But all this must mean a somewhat wider dispersal of the units of attack, and a consequent thinness of defence on any given front. The location of new aerodromes is naturally kept secret as far as possible, but

the situation of the old ones is a matter of common knowledge, the Monthly Air Force List, then accessible to any would-be purchaser, giving their exact positions, together with postal and telegraphic address and, even, the telephone number.

Whatever lies ahead for us in the near future, and however hard we may be tried, on one condition we laugh the idea of serious invasion to scorn. That condition is an Air Force strength, fighters and bombers both, which persistent air attack has not impaired, and which has been in no way diminished by a previous series of air offensives the entire success of which could not serve, at this juncture, to sway the tide of battle.



## TWO PHOTOGRAPHS AND A SHILLING

(*A Footnote to the Married Women's Nationality Law*)

BY HONOR TRACY

**T**HE wife of a British subject shall be deemed to be a British subject and the wife of an alien shall be deemed to be an alien.

Most of us are long since aware that the law is an ass. Yet some of its pronouncements reach extremes of asininity that we cannot accord them our usual indulgent smile. When we hear them, indeed, we are tempted to believe that the law is *the* Ass, the pattern for all other asses which Plato says, is laid up in heaven. We cannot fathom their meaning: in fact we are not altogether satisfied that they have a meaning: at best we may try to grasp the state of mind which gives them birth. For, as Bertrand Russell once remarked of Fascism, even if the official mind has no philosophy, it may at least have a psycho-analysis.

Here is an actual case, the case of Mrs. Z, a young woman living in London and married to an Austrian. When the *Anschluss* took place, the Nazis placed Mr. Z upon the list of expatriates, so that he became what is known as a stateless man. In consequence of this kindly act, Mrs. Z was allowed to keep her nationality under the law of 1933, which says: *Where a woman has married an alien and was at the time of her marriage a British subject, she shall not, by reason only of her marriage, be deemed to have ceased to be a British subject unless, by reason of her marriage, she acquired the nationality of her husband.* The case of Mrs. Z is therefore not an entirely representative one, but it shows how fragile are the few small concessions which have been won in the question of married women's nationality.

War broke out on September 3. The first cloud on Mrs. Z's horizon blew up on about the seventh when the American film company for which Mrs. Z had worked under her maiden name for over two years, announced that she would not be paid what was owing to her as she was now an enemy alien. Now, it is true that the individual who thought of this had a long series of ineptitudes and buffooneries to his credit and that among the eminent German exiles he had taken up at one time and another he went by the name of

*X, der Emigrantenschreck.* It is also true that thanks to Mrs. Z's solicitor the money was handed over. Yet the mere possibility of such a thing was a terrible blow.

Meanwhile, Mr. Z was practically living in the police station. The first time he went there to register, he was obliged to listen to vulgar abuse from a uniformed nonentity of the sort who crops up in wartime. For a man whose whole life had been thrown into shadow by the Germans, he bore it well. Presently, the police suggested that Mrs. Z should also register as an enemy alien: and Mrs. Z refused. An English official had assured her that she would remain a British national on marrying Mr. Z and at that time she had a simple faith in English officials that since has been lost. With tireless patience, she explained the law to the upholders of it.

The police took her statements in different ways. One said he knew and was sorry: but still, would she not go to Bow Street "for her own satisfaction?" Another remarked that it was all very well for the German Government to say her husband had lost his nationality, but that was absurd, because nationality was something which could not be lost.

—But, interposed Mrs. Z, you just told me I have lost mine.

—So you 'ave.

A third remarked, magnificently, that "all that 1933 business has been washed out now" and that Mrs. Z had been a German as from the outbreak of the war. A fourth, leaving the law on one side, explained that many young Englishwomen had married Nazi Germans and adopted their sympathies; and for that reason they had to keep a strict check on the English wives of enemy aliens. We know that in every community the rules, which all have to observe, are framed with an eye to that fraction of it which is cretinous. It is going a little too far to frame them on the assumption that all are criminals. As well insist on the nation leaving its finger-prints at Scotland Yard because amongst them there is a handful of thieves and murderers: or certify the Cabinet to be feeble-minded because in it there is . . . but we must not labour the point. The fact is, there is no reason or common sense in any of it, but it gives a policeman a singular joy, a feeling of achievement, every time he takes down a fresh name and address and adds it to his voluminous card-indexes. If Mrs. Z had been misguided enough to sympathize with and work for the criminals who had wrecked her husband's life and taken his country from him, not one of the petty vexations and restrictions imposed by the police would have prevented it. I wonder if in the whole of Britain there is anyone who can sleep the sounder at night for knowing that some thousands of his country-women have endured these things?



About this time, the Z's wanted to make a short journey beyond the five mile radius to which they were supposed to keep. Mrs. Z went on, and Mr. Z went to the station to ask for a permit. The police were hurt and angry to learn that Mrs. Z was travelling about her own country without their permission and they wrote out a second permit for her, in which they described her as a German. When Mr. Z handed her this document, she placed it upon the fire.

Shortly afterwards, they went before the Tribunal. All the judge seemed to care about was, whether Mr. Z had sympathies with the communists. Mr. Z cleared himself of this, and the pair received full exemptions. Mrs. Z was gratified indeed to receive a certificate informing all whom it might concern that she was exempt from internment until further notice. She, like her husband, was engaged in national service and left home a few days later to start work. The police came round to the flat twice to know what had happened to the travel permit issued in her name: the godly Mr. Z had handed his in to them. She wrote and explained that she had never asked for such a document to be issued to her, nor authorized her husband to do so; that she was not a German and did not care to be described as such, and had therefore destroyed the permit. This apparently threw the Force into a panic. They summoned Mr. Z urgently to the station, informed him they did not dare hand on such a letter to the higher authorities, concocted some lie about the affair and persuaded Mr. Z to put his signature to it. Otherwise, they averred, their very positions would be in jeopardy.

It is a curious fact, by the way, that these policemen, uncertain of the righteousness of their cause and rightly mistrustful of their reasoning power, were apt to fall back on emotional references to their feelings as Englishmen or to the insecurity of their jobs, with, as corollary, the distress of their wives and children. Mrs. Z has memories of villainous mugs, framed with a convict's bristles and with ears *en choufleur*, twisted into expressions of piteous appeal, which she would not readily forego: moments of pure delicious comedy which almost reconcile her to the misery of four months.

Following this, there was a short lull. Mrs. Z was serving on the land, but she came up to London for a day or two's leave. Twelve hours after her arrival, there was a knock at the door. Mrs. Z knew at once that the visitor was a plain-clothes man. When you have before you a working-class man who is yet well-nourished and well-dressed, whose face holds a strange mixture of brutality and subservience, who is equally ready to threaten and to touch his hat, you can assume that he is a pillar of the law.

The man informed Mrs. Z that he was specially sent over by the

Aliens Officer to tell her to go at once and register at Bow Street. Without delay. Two photographs and a shilling. Otherwise, he hinted darkly, he would come and "fetch" her. She tried once more to explain things but he would not listen: finally she weakened and promised to go. Instantly the detective began to exude bonhomie and charm.—Imagine *my* feelings, madam, he said, bowing from the waist, at having to say such things to a lady of my own nationality.

This superb remark, which made nonsense of all that had preceded it, raises the following interesting point: what do policemen understand by the word "nationality"? In their cloudy minds, it seems to be something which can be lost and which cannot be lost: Mrs. Z had to be sent to Bow Street because she had a different nationality, but it hurt them to have to send her there because she had the same. Mrs. Z's kindly efforts to straighten out their ideas for them met with a stubborn resistance. She gave it up.

Her obstruction to the law had sprung from no desire to agitate or demonstrate but from a profound longing to feel in no way different or separated from the other people in the country. Now, she took her two photographs and her shilling and registered as an enemy alien. She resigned from the national service. She applied, for what it was worth and until the Home Secretary "washed it all out" again, to be naturalized: but when the Home Office official heard the facts of her case, his face lit up with all the glee of a bureaucrat who sees twenty obstacles, a hundred extra forms to fill up, months of procedure, before a decision need be reached.—I don't think we can naturalize you, he said, contentedly, as you seem to be a British subject already. The law of 1933 washed out? Nonsense. Who said so? *Oh, the police . . .*

These are the things which can happen to an Englishwoman who has never left or wanted to leave England and who was entitled by law to keep her nationality on marrying.

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At the time war broke out, I was helping to bring in the harvest on a farm belonging to a highland Scot. It looked straight on to the sea near Harwich and as our reaper circled round and round the barley in the baking sun, we had a lovely view over the hazy blue North Sea and the tawny slopes of grain. Every morning we were at work in the fields by six and we did not stop in the evening until it was too dark to see. We were too exhausted then to do anything but to fall into bed with our clothes still on. We welcomed this exhaustion for in those last radiant days of August there was a feeling in the air of swiftly moving events, of great things toward, and that there was no greater honour than to participate



in them, however humbly. It was the mood in which a great people goes to war. After the war is over, there comes another, when the first is derided and belittled. We have laughed at our parents as they recalled the emotion of 1914, but we felt our spirits leap too on September 3, 1939. How we jeered at the words of the deplorable Mr. Brooke:—Honour has come back as a king to earth—but who did not feel that at last he could lift his head again, that at last King Henry's cry:—On, on, ye noblest English! need no longer raise uncomfortable titters when it was uttered? The phantom umbrella was banished from our dreams—we hoped, for good.

There is the one mood and the other, like hunger and satiety: it is of no use to judge between them. This footnote is no place for such discussions. The only point I wish to make is that on September 3 I felt the most serene and complete happiness of my life, to be with that crofter and his family, to be at one with them and with the whole country in our purpose and our understanding of what had to happen: and that then the observations of my own and the experiences of Mrs. Z, told to me piecemeal as they occurred, brought home to me the bitter fact that I had no real right to that happiness: that, indeed, I was a kind of poor relation to the feast: until I realized that I too lived here only with a kind of permit and I too felt bound to resign from national service.

If other women felt like this, the law would be changed to-morrow.

Let me end with a few words about the highland farmer. He had a fine head, covered with grizzled hair, and small deep-set eyes, the colour of the sea. His face was wrinkled and brown from his life in the sun. He loved to recite strange, long prayers before and after every meal. He worked like three men. On the fifth day of war, we received a visit from a half-wit: one of those half-wits who emerge from their holes in war, blinking a little in the light after their just obscurity, who put on armlets and peaked caps and get handsomely paid for it. I believe he called himself an Agricultural Adviser. He came briskly down the field to where we stood while the dew was drying off the uncut grain and he complained that the farmer was not getting his harvest in quickly enough.

—Then stairrt stukin' yersel! roared the latter, and pressed a pitchfork into the well tended hand. We turned away to hide our smiles. Later in the day, when the weary expert had asked and received permission to lie down in the shade of an elm, Farmer Lennox came up to me with some fruit.—Waur or nae waurr, Mistress, he confided, I'll naw hae the Government tell me hae ter mind me beesiness.

And that, speaking characteristically through the mouth of a

Scot, was the English voice: a voice not too often heard to-day: a voice which frequently is tired or cracked or, worst of all, falsetto. But for all that it is still a noble one and I shall always be glad to remember how I heard it speaking in those early days of war.

Some of the foregoing remarks may seem to have little to do with the right of Englishwomen to a full partnership in their country. To my mind, their claim is so simple and so just, and so capable of satisfaction at the present time, that there is not a great deal to say about it. It is intimately bound up with those larger issues to which I have referred here and again and which I believe to be the immediate concern of everyone in the land. And as to those issues, one thing is certain: if we ordinary people do not see to them, nobody else will.

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Since this article was written, Mr. Z has been interned. Two detectives appeared at his home at six in the morning, told him to pack a few necessary things and drove him away. Up to the time of going to press, nothing has been heard of him, that is to say, for nearly a month. Meanwhile, Mrs. Z trying to trace her husband, has been told that the law allowing English born wives to regain their nationality in war-time has been suspended: the reason of course being, that there is a war on.

## MOSCOW BOUND

BY J. T. MURPHY

*(An episode in the life of an idealist who hitched his wagon to the Red Star)*

**I**N January, 1920, a National Conference of the Shop Stewards took a decision which altered the whole course of my life. An invitation had been received from the Third International, with its headquarters in Moscow, to send delegates to an International Conference of revolutionary parties and organizations of Western Europe, to be held in Amsterdam during that month. Arthur MacManus and I were elected to represent the Shop Stewards' Movement at the conference.

How MacManus and I were going to get to Amsterdam we did not know. It was then exceedingly difficult to obtain passports and visas. But we had been elected to go to the Conference, and it was our job to get there. Some hitch, however, prevented MacManus from starting when the time came, and, after some scheming I managed to get a passport and a visa for Holland, and set off alone for Amsterdam.

All went well. I turned in quickly on the boat and slept soundly until the steward announced "The Hook". I had read a little of Amsterdam, and of course had heard frequently the song about "Diamonds in Amsterdam", but I'm afraid that I didn't know the Dutch language. I simply had to trust to Dutchmen speaking English for I needed to make contact with Dutch Socialists in order to find where the Conference was to be held.

Conferences of revolutionaries are like no other conferences in the world. Some delegates travel to them with the luxury of a passport from their government; others travel despite the refusal of their government to grant them passports, and still others travel after outwitting their governments in securing passports. One thing is certain, that a conference which happens contrary to the wishes of governments cannot afford to advertize where it is to be held.

I found the Dutch Socialists and the place of the Conference. And so did the Dutch police before the Conference was half way through its proceedings. Indeed, they must have known before-



hand, because Michael Borodin, who arrived on the day after it began, discovered them in an adjoining room with a dictaphone apparatus connected with the conference room.

There were many interesting personalities present. Professor Pannokoek and Rutgers, the engineer who later had charge of the great Kuznetsky plant in Soviet Siberia, a member of the Dutch Parliament, and several other prominent socialists of Holland, Fraina from the American revolutionary socialists, Sylvia Pankhurst from the Workers' Social Federation, and Fred Willis from the British Socialist Party, and many more from Germany, Belgium, France and Scandinavia. Clara Zetkin was expected but had not arrived when the conference began.

It was a remarkable gathering. Pannokoek and several of the socialists were very keen supporters of the theories of Rosa Luxemburg, and constituted themselves a "left" revolutionary socialist or communist group in the International. But the most interesting figures in the conference were Borodin and Rutgers. Both spoke English excellently. Rutgers I liked immensely. Tall, blue eyed, gentle of demeanour, relentless of purpose and infinite in his devotion to the revolution, he ably led the assembly and outlined the plans of the Third International.

The conference had been called to make preparations for the World Congress that it was intended to organize later in the year, but our discussions had not got very far when there was a sudden break in the proceedings and we were informed of what Borodin had discovered in an adjoining room. Quickly the conference broke up. But the police were also quickly on the move. Many of us were arrested. Those of us who had their passports in order were set free and told to clear out of the country. Those who had no passports were kept under arrest until deported.

On this occasion I did not return to England. Instead I changed my address in Amsterdam for a day or two, and then made my way to the home of Rutgers at Amersfoort, a small town some thirty miles from Amsterdam. This was a little military centre, and Rutger's house was pleasantly situated within a few yards of the barracks. One by one other delegates arrived there, including Borodin, Fraina and an Italian whose name I have forgotten. There we stayed for a week or more enjoying the kind hospitality of Rutgers and his wife. It was decided that if possible the delegates should make for Moscow for the World Congress of the Third International that had now been called for June. As this coincided with my instructions to go to Moscow I was particularly happy about the decision.

The week of waiting spent at the Rutgers' home was most interesting. I was especially attracted to Borodin. He was a tall, well

built, black-haired, swarthy complexioned man, an excellent linguist, thoroughly acquainted with the general literature and history of many countries and a professional revolutionary to boot. He had arrived at Amsterdam in a cargo boat from Spain after fulfilling a mission from Moscow to Mexico and the United States. He was for many years a member of the Russian Social Democratic Party (Bolshevik), now the Russian Communist Party, familiar with many parts of the world, and he knew, as few people do, how to adapt himself to all kinds and conditions of people. Of all the so-called "emissaries" of Lenin I have known, I know of none more expert and capable than he in winning the confidence and regard of the people to whom he was sent.

To my great joy it was decided that Borodin and I should travel together. There was no possibility of getting visas on our passports, so we determined to walk across the Dutch-German frontier. To get to the frontier we had first of all to walk some twenty miles or more. We left the military town behind us before daylight one morning and tramped along the flat Dutch highways. Here and there the flatness was relieved by woodland and little villages with white cottages and windmills. Winter is not the best time to see Holland, but we enjoyed the long tramp. We travelled light, having left our luggage to be sent on to Berlin by train. By night we arrived at our village where we hoped to make contact with smugglers to guide us across the frontier. We had a letter of introduction to a worker who had a smithy. To our surprise we found his living room, sleeping room and smithy were all one, and none too large. He and his wife welcomed us warmly while the three young children looked on shyly. Though very poor they immediately prepared a simple meal, and told us we could stay until we had made arrangements to move on.

One large oil lamp shed its rays over smithy and beds and table while we ate our evening meal and discussed with the man our next steps. He was not a communist, but a worker very sympathetic to us. I could only participate in the conversation with Borodin as translator but we managed very well.

The same evening our host went off to find a smuggler. Contrary to expectations, this proved rather difficult. Several agreed, then turned us down because the guard along the frontier had been strengthened in anticipation of some of us crossing this way. We had to wait three days with our friends before securing our guide. Then late one evening we started off from a farmyard, hidden in the bottom of a cart covered with hay. We travelled thus for some miles away from the neighbouring passport station. After a couple of hours jogging along the roads we came to a dense woodland. There we left the farm hand and his hay cart, and the three of us—

Borodin, the smuggler and myself—began the hike across “No Man’s Land”—of forest, swamps and moorland. We had about five miles to walk before we could consider ourselves safely in Germany. Had it been a straightforward walk, it would hardly have been worthy of note. But we were permitted so little walking. It was literally a crawl.

It was a lovely moonlight night. A sharp frost made the night air nippy but we wished before long that a much harder frost had gripped the swampy land we had to cross. Having located the military patrol near the barbed wire marking the frontier of Holland, we hid in the woodland until opportunity offered to crawl under the wire and into No Man’s Land. This safely negotiated we followed our smuggler friend along strange pathways which it would have been impossible for us to discover had we been alone. About half-way across we had a terrific fright. Feeling sure, as we heard the galloping horses, that a mounted patrol had located us, we flung ourselves on the ground among some bushes and waited. It was a false alarm. The horses were riderless. Once more we moved on skirting the open spaces, and slowly groping our way until we reached the barbed wire of the German frontier. Once through this our guide led us carefully about two miles further into Germany to a farmstead.

It was now about four o’clock in the morning, and fearing to rouse the household, we turned into a loft and there snuggled into the hay until dawn.

At last the time came for us to move once more. Our friend the smuggler slipped out and saw his friend the farm hand, and in a few minutes we had transferred ourselves to a large kitchen. We had a breakfast of black bread and coffee which was all we could get, and an indication of the poverty of the farm labourers of Germany. But the coffee was hot. That was its chief virtue. In another half hour we were on the high road. We received our directions from the smuggler, paid him for his services, said good-bye and were left to our own resources.

We now had a ten miles’ walk before us before we dare get on a train, as we had to get well beyond Bentheim passport station. By the time we had covered the necessary distance and boarded the train for Berlin we were thoroughly footsore. I was wearing boots that were far too heavy, and Borodin’s were far too light. Consequently both of us got our feet badly blistered. The wonder is that we were not arrested as vagrants at the station where we took tickets for the train. We were an unshaven, dirty, limping couple, and, I should think, easily recognizable as foreigners.

Borodin could speak German excellently. I kept silent whenever Germans were in ear shot. But all went well and once on the



train we needed no rocking to sleep. I did keep awake long enough to be amazed at the startling difference between Germany and Holland. In Germany everything seemed so precise, so orderly and big.

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Owing to my lack of foreign languages, it was decided that it would be difficult for me to reach Russia via Poland and might well spoil Borodin's chances of doing so if I accompanied him. He therefore set off alone. I along with Fraina who had recently joined us again decided to travel through Denmark and Sweden to Stockholm, and there cross to Reval or Finland.

Fraina was a dashing little fellow of Italian stock. He would be no more than five feet five inches in height and lightly built. A peculiar cast in one eye was hidden somewhat by his thick horn rimmed spectacles. He wore a moustache and a little beard which gave him, he thought, a Trotsky-like appearance which appealed to his vanity. Vain he certainly was but he was also an able journalist and theoretician.

We set off one morning to Hamburg, a beautiful city and a great port. There we met revolutionary friends and after waiting a few days all was declared ready for the next stage of our journey. This time we had to cross two frontiers, the German frontier and that of what was known as an "international area" before we could get into Denmark. And of course we had to walk across them as neither of us had visas which would permit us to travel by more comfortable means.

From Hamburg we went to Kiel which was still a centre of immense revolutionary activity. The Red Guards were still in existence, and we were to be indebted to them in a way which we did not anticipate. When in Kiel, Fraina insisted on purchasing some mementoes of our passing through the town. As luck would have it we each purchased a revolver. What on earth for I don't know, for neither of us could use a revolver. They did, however, become a source of embarrassment which was really amusing.

Having negotiated the frontiers, which were not quite so difficult as the Dutch-German frontier, we landed in Flensburg. We had just boarded a train to take us to the Danish frontier when we were arrested for travelling without visas. We were rushed off the train and into the police headquarters. We were immediately searched. Both of us had small cases with our shaving tackle, a collar or two, pyjamas, handkerchiefs, a few pamphlets, and several Tauchnitz volumes. All these were spread unceremoniously on the table. Then our pockets were emptied and out came the revolvers but no ammunition, pencils, pens, pocket knives, a box of chessmen and a folding chessboard.

The revolvers seemed to speak volumes to the police. We were bundled into the prison cells and there left to think things over. The next day I insisted on sending telegrams to Tom Mann who was then General Secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering Union, and to the Shop Stewards asking for their assistance.

This caused a certain amount of stir among the officials, but we had to kick our heels in prison for two or three weeks. The gaol officials treated us very decently. We were transferred from our separate cells and permitted to share a large cell with accommodation for four people. Our books and chessmen were returned to us and we were allowed to have meals sent in from a neighbouring restaurant. One hour a day we had to walk round and round the prison yard for exercise.

Meanwhile our friends outside were getting busy. A number of the Red Guards from Kiel planned to raid the gaol and get us out. The officials got to know of the preparations and were alarmed because only a few weeks before, a raid on a neighbouring prison had been successful and a number of political prisoners had got away. Rather than have the risk of further trouble of this kind, the officials decided on a plan of their own. They offered to send us to Hamburg if we would give an undertaking to return to England. Naturally we gave it. Two police officers conducted us to the frontier and handed us over to the Danish officers in charge of the "international area". They in all good faith conducted us to the German frontier. The Germans, however, refused to let us in to their country because we had no visas. The officers were a bit nonplussed because they had accepted us under the impression that everything was arranged for us to go right through to Hamburg. They returned us to Flensburg but the Flensburg officials refused to have us because we had no visas for their territory. The Danish officers fumed and swore and telephoned wildly for instructions. Finally, in exasperation the officer in charge who could speak English excellently, having lived in Australia for four years, told us we would have to walk into Germany the same way we had come out of it. I explained that we did not know the way.

"Never mind" he answered "we'll show you".

We were put in charge of two soldiers who took us back to the German frontier and escorted us illegally across it and beyond the passport station. There they left us. We walked on a few miles and then took train for Hamburg. Our luck appeared to be out on this journey, for at the next station we came under the observations of the German police. We were not formally arrested but informally accompanied. They told us they were instructed to see that we fulfilled our promise to return to England

from Hamburg. We only escaped their attention by jumping from the train as it moved out of Hamburg Central station.

After such difficulties we did not feel under any obligation to go back to London. Instead we made our way back to Berlin to consider afresh how to get to Russia. We reported to the representative of the Third International in Berlin and received further financial help to continue our journey. At least I did, for all I had received from the Shop Stewards' Committee had long since been spent. After waiting a week or two we learned that ships were now sailing between Stettin and Reval and we set off for Stettin. This is a fair-sized port in North Germany. How we were going to get on a ship we hardly knew. One thing was certain. We could only travel as stowaways and the problem was to make contact either with some officers or firemen and sailors on a ship travelling between Stettin and Reval.

By this time both of us had learned a little of the German language but not enough to converse freely. We visited a few hotels and restaurants frequented by ships' officers and listened in until I was fortunate enough to make the acquaintance of one who spoke English well. Having sounded him about his profession and its conditions, it was soon clear that most of them, captains included were not against doing a little smuggling to reinforce their salaries which were affected by the inflation now developing rather rapidly. I told him I was an Irish revolutionary and where I wanted to go. At once he was very interested and it was not long before he agreed to stow us away for a consideration. Unfortunately, at the last moment when we were about to make for the ship, the captain received orders to go to Stockholm instead of Reval. So the search had to begin again . . .

Having found a ship that we knew was going to Reval there was nothing for it but to find the way on to it. So now I searched for the firemen who I knew were the best fellows for the purpose. We found them with the help of a syndicalist organizer. He knew the firemen on this very ship and there were several good revolutionary workers among them. We arranged a meeting with them, discussed the problem and agreed on what was to be done.

Hence one night, dressed in firemen's overalls, with cap and bundle and bag we negotiated our way into the docks, boarded the ship and stowed away. At first we were put into the chain box and told to stop there until the ship got out to sea and the port officials had cleared off the ship. Big greasy chains are not exactly soft things to sit on. Nor is a chain box a really comfortable room. But we had to make the best of it and there we sat sprawled in the pitch darkness for some hours. Suddenly there was an alarm. The port officials had begun their search of the ship for contraband



and stowaways. We were unceremoniously pulled out of the chain box and put right at the bottom of the ship to cling precariously in the darkness to a couple of girders for an hour which seemed like six.

At last came relief and we were helped out of our uncomfortable hiding place into the firemen's bunks. This was a relief, or so we thought until we had been there some time. Then we found the bunks very lively. The army of small inhabitants occupying them were very active and good biters. Bugs appear to be thorough going internationalists occupying all countries with impunity and unhesitatingly feeding on all races without discrimination.

But there we had to stay for about three days and nights. Our next problem was how to get off the ship. Once more our luck held. There were on board about one hundred Russian prisoners of war returning to Russia under the repatriation schemes which were put into operation after the end of the war. They were herded at the same end of the ship as the firemen's quarters. In the course of the journey we negotiated to exchange places with two of these Russian prisoners and before we arrived at Reval we mixed with the Russians and two of them took our places in the bunks. We were each given a Russian name to which we had to answer if there was a roll call. Fortunately for us we were not asked our names or I am certain that when these were pronounced we could not have recognized them.

All went well and we emerged with the crowd and marched off the ship as prisoners of war. Then we were lined up on the quay-side while Russian and Esthonian officers counted us and checked their report sheets. Then we were marched through the streets of Reval under the escort of a body of Esthonian soldiers to the railway station. Once more we were lined up and counted and then herded into cattle trucks. Then slowly we rolled across the plains of Esthonia towards the Russian frontier.

*(Mr. Murphy's article is an extract from his forthcoming autobiography "New Horizons" to be published by John Lane, The Bodley Head).*

## THE WARS AND THE ACTOR

BY ST. JOHN ERVINE

**I**N an article in the last issue of *THE FORTNIGHTLY*, I tried to show how profoundly the drama had been affected by the mood of exhausted Europe during the period which elapsed between the suspension of the war in 1918 and its resumption in 1939. In the present article, I will try to show how this mood affected the actor.

All students of acting realize, without much effort, that ideas about acting change drastically in the course of time, and that performances which appeared to our forefathers to be first-rate might appear fustian to us. The eloquence of one generation is the rant of the next. Mrs. Siddons could frighten the wits out of a shop assistant by her request for a hank of wool, and reduce an audience in London to such a state of alarm that a performance of Rowe's shoddy work, *Tamberlane*, had to be suspended while the manager of the theatre assured those present that Mrs. Siddons was alive and well and not, as the audience felt sure she must be, dead from the effects of her own acting. We may doubt whether Mrs. Siddons could frighten a shop assistant to-day or cause any disturbance in the nervous system of a modern audience. We may even believe that were she to perform the part of Arpsia in a contemporary theatre as she performed it a hundred and fifty years ago, the audience would be in fits of laughter and not in fits of fright, and more eager, probably, to hear of her demise than her survival.

Actors and actresses in her time could appal their colleagues on the stage no less than the audience in the theatre. When two seasoned actors, Homan and the elder Macready, saw her Arpsia, the former turned to the latter and said, "Macready, do I look as pale as you"? Barry Sullivan, acting *Macbeth* in Cork, turned on a super with such effect that the man fell on his knees in a state of terror and begged for pardon. These are known facts, and they demonstrate beyond all doubt a difference, not only in the nature of acting, but in the nature of the audience, which remove them both almost from contact with acting and the audience of to-day. They do not disestablish the greatness of Siddons or Sullivan. Were these two alive, they would adapt their genius to the mood of our time as ably as they adapted it to the mood of their own time. Nelson would not be less effective on oil-ships than he was

on sailing ships. He would have won Trafalgar under steam as thoroughly as he won it under air.

The difference between the style of acting fashionable a century ago, and that fashionable now is obvious and easily perceived. What is less obvious and easily perceived is the difference between the style of acting which flourished before August 4, 1914, and that which was flourishing on September 3, 1939. We are ready to grant that Irving's acting might have to be revised to be popular now, but are we equally ready to recognize that Alexander's style, Tree's style, Waller's style, Wyndham's style might also have to be revised? Are we certain that Henry Ainley's acting would draw the town to-day as it drew the town a decade ago? Was it not evident that the taste for Gerald du Maurier had declined before his death? Miss Gladys Cooper no longer adorns the English stage. Her place is in America. A great change has occurred—so much is plain—but what caused it is not so plain. The swing from one generation to another is not, I think, sufficient to account for it. Miss Marie Tempest was a star when Henry Irving was at the height of his renown: she is still a star, though Irving has been dead for thirty-five years. Has the change been caused by the cinema? Or has a theory of acting which was only beginning to pervade the theatre in 1914, now prevailed? Is the change a result of a combination of these causes? The last explanation seems the most likely to be true.

But what is the change? In what way are Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Mr. Charles Laughton, Mr. John Gielgud, Mr. Emlyn Williams, Mr. Laurence Olivier, Mr. Michael Redgrave, and Mr. Ralph Richardson different from George Alexander, Beerbohm Tree, Charles Wyndham, Henry Ainley, Owen Nares and Gerald du Maurier? Lewis Waller was a manly romantic actor. So is Godfrey Tearle. Is there, essentially, any difference between them? Is the difference between Ellen Terry, Mrs. Kendal, Irene and Violet Vanbrugh, Ellis Jeffreys, Lilian Braithwaite, and Gladys Cooper, on the one hand, and Edith Evans, Gwen Ffrangcon-Davies, Celia Johnson and Peggy Ashcroft, on the other, deep or superficial? Are Mrs. Patrick Campbell and Dame Sybil Thorndike incapable of contact? How are we to account for Dame Marie Tempest, who has retained her authority on the stage through fifty-five years of extraordinary social changes, and Dame May Whitty, who, when she was over seventy, strengthened her craft and increased her renown? Mr. Allan Aynesworth, in his seventy-fifth year, remains an accomplished comedian, able to make a whisper heard in the gallery when younger actors can scarcely be heard in the third row of the stalls. How wide is the gap between Mr. Hayden Coffin and Mr. Noel Coward, Mr. Bertram Wallis and



Mr. Jack Buchanan, Miss Gertie Miller and Miss Gertie Lawrence, Miss Connie Ediss and Miss Beatrice Lillie? Would Dan Leno recognise a comedian in Mr. Syd Walker or Mr. Jack Warner? Are Marie Lloyd and Miss Gracie Fields sisters under their skins? We can, I think, answer the last two questions affirmatively. The music-hall has, superficially, changed a lot, but essentially it remains unchanged. Mr. George Robey and Mr. Max Miller are closely related. Mr. Miller takes more liberties than Mr. Robey was allowed, but their manner is much the same. There is more resemblance than difference between George Lashwood and Mr. Vic Oliver. Mr. Stanley Lupino and Mr. Leslie Henson are substantially the same. The tradition of the light entertainment is so firm and stable that Mr. George Graves was able to hold his own in *Me and My Girl* with his junior, Mr. Lupino Lane. Mr. Harry Champion and Sir Harry Lauder are as effective on the air as they were in the old Tivoli. Miss Nellie Wallace has, figuratively speaking, been on the variety stage ever since it was started.

But even in the music-hall a definite and distinct difference of style is observable between the variety performances of thirty-five years ago and those of to-day. Artistes, as they liked to call themselves, formerly depended almost entirely on their own personalities. They seldom, if ever, used the help of elaborate and spectacular effects, nor did they eke out their own nature with that of chorus girls. Leno, standing in front of a crudely-painted drop-scene, could hold an audience enthralled for half an hour. Marie Lloyd, unaided by a bevy of beautiful bounding belles, as the members of the chorus are occasionally called, could keep a large crowd strictly under her control. Mr. Cochran's Young Ladies were still unborn. Inadequate individualities were not then able to seem larger than life by the help of brilliant sets, brilliant lights, and swift, unclothed chorus girls. Individuality cannot, of course, be eliminated from entertainment, and there are comedians to-day no less individual than any of former times. Mr. Miller and Mr. Oliver, as I have already suggested, owe their popularity strictly to their own talents and not to extraneous assistance. Mr. Jack Warner's individuality is so distinct that it pervades the broadcasts from the Garrison Theatre and makes him immensely effective with people who have never in their lives set eyes on him. There is, however, a tendency even in the variety theatre to rely on effects to a greater degree than was customary in the days of Lloyd and Leno. We are less assertive individually, more assertive collectively, than we were. This change is apparent everywhere in the theatre. It is part of the general change of mood in the community. Those of us who are old enough to make a comparison between them can perceive the extent of the change when we compare the

performance of Lewis Waller in *Monsieur Beaucaire* or *Henry V.* with that of Mr. Godfrey Tearle in *The Faithful Heart* or *The Flashing Stream*. Waller was a romantic actor. So is Mr. Tearle. The four plays named are romantic pieces. The romance in all of them is irrational, as romance ought to be, but the performances have suffered a sea-change. Waller declaimed. Mr. Tearle seems to debate.

Primarily, of course, the change started in the auditorium. The playgoer had changed, so the player had to change with him. We saw the change most clearly when Robert Loraine revived *Cyrano de Bergerac* in 1927. Ex-Service men, embittered by their experience in mechanized war, were in no mood to regard it as romantic, and Rostand's play excited their derision, especially when the lovely Roxane arrived in the trenches in a coach complete with footmen. Though there was heroic quality in the play, and, despite mechanization, one could wear a panache as well in 1914-18 as in 1640. The man had been subordinated to the machine, and he felt his indignity, although, by a strange freak, the most mechanized part of the forces, the flying corps, was that in which individual effort and chivalrous contact were most clearly possible. Our insatiable longing for a hero made us over-rate T. E. Lawrence, who became, to romance-starved minds, a combination, as one of his biographers, Mr. Vyvyan Richards, declared, of St. Francis, Abraham Lincoln, Leonardo da Vinci, Stonewall Jackson, a Steffansen, an Odysseus, a Sven Hedin and a Shakespearean Conrad instead of a whimsical don with a passion for mystification and publicity. But the world was being made safe for centralization. The regimentation of mankind had begun. We were sick of dominant personalities. We turned away from strident and well-advertised individuals to low-toned and anonymous officials and groups. The bureaucrat took precedence over the politician, in fact though not in appearance, and team work was everywhere extolled. The stars were told to hide their diminished rays. A gentleman in a power-station, operating a neat switch, would provide all the light we required. There were to be no positions of personal authority. The powder-monkey and the admiral would henceforth be interchangeable. So would the principal actor and the super. Henry Irving would play Hamlet to-night and the noise outside in the third act to-morrow. Ellen Terry, who was Beatrice on Monday, would wave her arms in the chorus on Saturday. Team work, that was the slogan for the future. We were all to be equal in the ant-heap. There were no great men. All men were unheroic and mean in the same degree. The Little Man was the only man, and not much of a man: a frightened rabbit, ready to run to his burrow. We could not come short of glory, because there was no glory! . . .

The theory was, of course, daft, and it led direct to totalitarianism in which a demented individualism prevails. The immediate outcome of team work in the theatre was the rise to supreme and disastrous power of the producer or, as he is called in America, the director. He became the master of the stage, setting the scene, supervising the acting, and "interpreting" the play, to the extent, even, of changing entirely its author's intention. Inevitably this uncontrolled director became rampant in the totalitarian state of Russia, where a director considered it his duty, as well as his privilege, to re-write a play so that it should fit his conception of what its author ought to have written. Under the bondage of this theory of the theatre, Shakespeare became an early apostle of Bolshevism, and his plays were re-written and arranged to prove that he had anticipated the teachings of Karl Marx and was Lenin's herald. Acting became, under the producer, a mere matter of drill. The player was invited to reproduce the very voice of his director. Chalk marks were made on the stage, so that the actor could always toe the line. He must move thus far and no farther. An inch more or an inch less would be disastrous to the producer's "interpretation" of the play. The delivery of lines must be uniform and intimate. "Intimacy", indeed, became so common on the stage that audiences everywhere complained of inaudibility, and a suggestion was made that managements, instead of offering opera-glasses for hire, should offer ear-trumpets and telephones. Amplifiers were actually installed in little theatres, although an earlier generation of actors were able, without such aids, to make themselves heard in houses as large as Drury Lane. St. Paul's advice on enunciation, given with enviable vivacity in First Corinthians, xiv, 7-11 and again in verse 19, if it was ever read by over-produced actors, was disregarded. Actors were instructed to be "natural", to behave in a drawing-room set on the stage as if they were in an actual drawing-room in Saffron Walden or Pinner. People do not "shout" in real drawing-rooms. Why, then, should they "shout" in pretended drawing-rooms? The fact that an audience is not listening to the conversation in a real drawing-room was not mentioned, and the players "pussyfooted" through their parts.

The actor was ordered, not to learn and deliver the author's lines, but to give an impression of them. It was not important to say what the author had written, but to seem to say what the author had written. Lines might profitably be thrown away. This or that passage of dialogue was of no consequence and might, therefore, be mumbled! . . . It was not long, as this theory came into practice, before the producer's "interpretation" of the author's intention became more important than the intention



itself. "Don't bother about what Mr. Shaw meant. This is what I mean! . . ." Producers then began to cut plays, where authors allowed them to do so, and even to re-arrange or re-write the dialogue. Advertisements appeared in the press of Mr. So-and-So's production of *Hamlet*. The producer's name was printed in large type. The author's name, when it was printed at all, appeared in smaller type. In attempting to get rid of individual personalities, the theatre had substituted for a distinguished actor and a distinguished author, each seeking to exploit to the utmost the other's talent, an undistinguished director who sought to make himself powerful by their extinction. Pseudo-democracy in the theatre, as elsewhere, led straight to dictation.

The taste for polite comedy, degenerating into the taste for smart, trivial comedy, full of short, snappy lines and wise-cracks, affected English acting. The English are renowned on the Continent for the skill with which they perform comedy parts. In these parts, they were, and still are, unmatched, particularly in polished comedy as distinct from smart comedy. American actors are catching up on them in "snappy", wise-cracking pieces, and will probably surpass them; but so long as authors, such as Congreve, Wilde, Shaw and Somerset Maugham survive, English actors will remain supreme in the performance of their work and its kind. The fact is recognized in New York, where an English actor is certain to be preferred to a native actor for a part which requires the display of what must be called the characteristics of a well-bred and cultivated man. But this skill in comedy performance has resulted in a serious decline in character acting. In America, character actors are numerous and exceedingly able. In England, they are few and not so able. American acting differs deeply from English. On the whole, American actresses are superior to English actresses, but English actors, on the whole, are superior to American. That is a very rough, and may be a rash, generalization, but it receives support from critics of authority on both sides of the Atlantic. It has, however, to be modified by such qualifications as that which I have set out, namely, that American actors are more skilful in character work than English actors. It is because of their great skill in comedy performances, a skill which is undoubtedly the result of the public distaste for poetic and tragic plays, that our players are no longer able to perform serious work as ably as they once were. An actress who has spent much of her time on the stage in uttering clipped and discoloured lines of six or seven words in length, will have trouble with her tongue when she comes to speak Shakespearean lines. An actor, trained in the Coward school and accustomed to lines such as these from *This Was a Man*:

Edward: What's the matter with you, Evie?

Evelyn: Nothing.

Edward: You're not only telling me extremely fatuous lies, but you look like death.

Evelyn: They're not lies. I - - -

Edward: Don't be an ass. Have a drink.

Evelyn: No—I don't want a drink.

Edward: What's wrong?

Evelyn: There's nothing wrong.

Edward: You'd better tell me you know.

Evelyn: I want to tell you.

Edward: Come on, then.

Evelyn: I've got to tell you.

Edward: Out with it.

Evelyn: But I can't! . . .

will trip over his own lips when he has to play the part of Troilus and speak these lines to Cressida, telling her of his immediate departure from Troy:

And suddenly; where injury of chance  
 Puts back leave-taking, justles roughly by  
 All time of pause, rudely beguiles our lips  
 Of all rejoinder, forcibly prevents  
 Our lock'd embrasures, strangles our dear vows  
 Even in the birth of our own labouring breath:  
 We two, that with so many thousand sighs  
 Did buy each other, must poorly sell ourselves  
 With the rude brevity and discharge of one.  
 Injurious time now with a robber's haste  
 Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how:  
 As many farewells as be stars in heaven,  
 With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,  
 He fumbles up into a loose adieu,  
 And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,  
 Distasted with the salt of broken tears.

But, perhaps, the most adverse of the contemporary influences on an actor, especially on the young actor, is the cinema where he is directed to death. Superficially considered, the moving picture would seem likely to develop *mime* in an actor, since, even in the talkies, action and facial expression remain supreme; but actually the actor has less liberty in a film studio than he has on a stage ruled by a rigorous producer; for he is not allowed to make a single movement in a picture that has not been devised by its director and in which he has not been drilled almost beyond endurance. He never experiences the exhilaration and exaltation of contact with an audience, since all his performances are given in a studio with no person present except those concerned in the manufacture of the picture: an experience which would be equalled by the actor if he never performed in any presence but that of the producer, the electricians and the stage hands. The loss of this contact with an

audience eventually blunts the edge of his acting, and he is obliged to return to the living theatre to have it sharpened. But he has suffered an irreparable injury: he has been mechanized. The overpowering personal quality which enabled Mrs. Siddons to terrify the shop assistant, and made Henry Irving prevail in every company where he appeared, is no longer required, and it shrivels and will finally cease to live. Your film star's life is brief. He goes almost as quickly as he comes. "What is the average life of a girl in films"? I said to a man prominent in entertainment. "Three pictures", he replied.

How little value there is in film work to an actor is apparent when it is realized that no "pure" film star, by which I mean a star who has been trained and has acted only in pictures, has yet succeeded in establishing him or herself on the living stage. Some dire exhibitions have been made by ambitious ladies who have tried to make a reputation in the theatre equal to their reputation on the screen, exhibitions which they have had the good sense not to repeat.

Personality has not, of course, disappeared from the theatre. Far from it. Stars, despite all the contempt that has been poured upon them by very young men, continue to shine in every theatrical firmament, and we may believe that they will always continue to do so. Mr. Gielgud, with a modesty which I consider to be entirely reprehensible, has sometimes subordinated himself to the team spirit, assuming a part either negligible in itself or below his range, but he cannot de-star himself, and it is right and proper that he should fail to do so. St. Paul was democratic enough not to care who did the work so long as it was done. "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos"? he wrote to the Corinthians when they were over-concerned about their dignity. "I have planted, Apollos watered: but God gave the increase". Yet he had no delusive beliefs about equality, nor did he deceive himself with vapid talk about the team spirit; and he knew that there are degrees of ability and status. "There is one glory of the sun", he wrote again to the Corinthians, "and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another in glory". Ellen Terry, towards the end of her life, after she had listened with superb patience to a brilliant producer who told her when to move, how to move, how far to move, when to speak her lines and even how to speak them, said demurely, "Yes, I'll do all that, and then I'll add the little extra bit that earns my salary"! There can be no acting without personality, nor can there be personality without freedom of expression. It would be false to say that we have no actors of great talent, though it may be true to say that we have none who possess genius; but it is not false to say that the craft of acting may



be ruined if we permit it to remain mechanized to the extent it has been. We may yet see a separation of the stage from the screen, with the actor, who generally hates performing in film studios, refusing to be seen in a picture lest he should ruin himself on the stage. It would be foolish and futile to try to prophecy what will be the fate of the actor after the war is over. But we may hope that the concern of the theatre with comedies for the comfortable classes may cease, and that the working people, who formerly frequented the playhouse, may do so again, bringing with them their ancient and undiminished love of high and deep emotions, their unquenchable preoccupation with the fundamentals of our lives. When that day returns and the range of our stage is extended, actors will once more command our feelings, and it may be possible that an actress will walk into Harrod's or Selfridge's or Woolworth's and request a hank of wool in tones that will terrify the clerk behind the counter.

*(Mr. St. John Ervine's article "The Wars and the Drama," appeared in the July issue of THE FORTNIGHTLY).*

## TRUE LOVERS' KNOT

BY OSBERT SITWELL

**E**VEN when I first knew him—and it must be many years ago—Carey Totnell appeared to be an old man, with the bearded face of Socrates, only in appearance a more elegant philosopher, tinged, in the passage of time by the epicurean. He seemed to survive as a type, the perfect bachelor of the eighties of the last century, suave in manner, cultivated in mind, leading a life both ordered and orderly. He might—except that his mind was more emancipated—have stepped straight out of the first act of one of Pinero's plays, set in Albany; well-read, in a fashion now almost extinct, a lover of the classics, so that he would often read Greek and Latin Poetry for his own enjoyment, his choice was governed by a natural taste for all good things, and he showed, too, a great respect for food and wine. I much appreciated his taste and intelligence and culture, his tired wisdom and kindness: but sometimes I wondered at the garnished emptiness of his existence.

Only once, I think, did I hear him enunciate, in a deliberate, very individual voice which gave point to every word he said, sentiments that sounded as though in some way bound up with his life. And the theory that he had then propounded, fantastic as it seemed that evening, returned to my mind later when I heard of his death.

I had been dining with him—in Albany, of course—and we were talking alone in a corner of his library, while the others played bridge. I was young at the time and he was rallying me on a supposed desire to avoid family responsibilities and ties. "My dear boy", I remember his concluding, "it's no use your ever trying to escape. You are provided with only a few people among whom to play during your life. Some enter at birth, others drift in later. You can hate or love them as the threads that are their lives touch and knot yours, inextricably or loosely, as it may prove: but that doesn't matter: there they will be at every turn in your life, whereas others, whom you may like better, appear only once, for a month or two, and it will be no use your trying ever to see them again . . . Better at once to accept defeat and try to like those with whom Destiny has thrown you. It saves trouble; for there they'll be, sure enough, at the end! And so it is, too, with places. In normal times—not, of course, during wars or revo-

lutions—only a few scenes are provided as background to the action of your whole life: to these you seem chained throughout your career on earth, and even when death himself arrives for you.”

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All those who had ever stayed in Miss Pomfret's house, liked to return at least once a week to see her, because it was easy to look in at St. James's Place and they were sure of welcome and amusement. Moreover, she could boast that strange gift, given to so few, of making all her friends, their friends. Originally, I had found my way thither by chance, her lodgings having been recommended by the porter of my club. But I had soon—in company, indeed, with all her guests—taken a great liking to her. She was a personage altogether uncommon, surviving from the age of Shakespeare, audacious and robust as Juliet's nurse, and with a natural gift for original observation and trenchant phrase. By nature Elizabethan, it had been her earthly lot to live through more than half of the Victorian reign, and so she had learned that now people could be shocked, and that a great many of them deserved the sensation.

However, to tow this warm-blooded, vigorously reacting human being, built on so magnificent a scale, both morally and physically, with her keen, peasant understanding of men and women (rare, because reached entirely through her individual eyes, in an age when the whole population has been taught to read and write), to attempt to tow her, then, and anchor her within the limited space of a short story, is a little like trying to introduce a whale within the confines of a swimming-pool. We will only, therefore, take a single glance at her large frame, its many rotund contours encased in black silk, on which were disposed several gold ornaments, at the high black collar round her neck, surmounted by a little white ruff; which imparted to her smiling and rather creased face the shining geniality of a Franz Hals, so that, most of all, her visitors liked to see her—as sometimes, but not often, they did—holding up a wineglass under the light, drinking to the health of a friend.

One evening, I found, as usual, a good many people in her sitting-room on the ground floor; and among others, Carey . . . I had not realized before that Miss Pomfret and he were friends. I remember the occasion well, because she gave us a lively description of her new lodger, above, in the best suite. She had taken a great fancy to him—though he was a spiritualist; a faith of which she could not altogether approve—for he sent her enormous bunches of flowers from time to time, and she admired, too, the way in which he had done up his sitting-room, with, as she said “‘H'indian 'angings' and H'egyptian bronzes on marble pedestri-ans”, cats,



bulls and hawks. "Five thousand years old, some of 'em are," she said confidently. But now came a sound of a bump overhead, followed by intoning: and Miss Pomfret broke off, to remark "That's 'im. Prying to that blooming 'awk, agine, I suppose."

She liked to stay up talking as late as she could, till two or three in the morning if possible—perhaps because this to her was a symbol of being her own mistress at last, with no need to get up early. So, to gratify her propensity in this matter, I stayed behind after the others had gone, and it was there that she told me she had been nurse and personal maid to old Mrs. Totnell, Carey's mother, from about 1882 till her death in 1900, and had known intimately her numerous—there were seven brothers and sisters—offspring. Their father, a famous counsel, had long been dead, and Carey was the eldest son, the cleverest, the pride and despair of his family . . . I obtained from her, little by little, a picture of my old friend as a young man; a full-length portrait in the pointillist manner, acquired by placing a blob of paint here, a blob there.

In spite of those same responsibilities, about which he liked continually to harangue me, the inhabitant of that elegant, empty shell of to-day had been, it appeared, fierce, wild and untrammelled, a source of anxiety, instead—as now—of quiet comfort to his relatives. And in any particular difficulty that arose—or, more generally, that himself had created—it had been his very sensible habit to consult Miss Pomfret, since she could understand anything, however unglossed, that belonged to human nature, to ask her advice, and to request her to act as intermediary between himself and his family. Moreover, what ever he did, or whatever she may have pretended to the contrary, she was, in reality, fonder of the gay, exquisite, audacious "Mr. Carey" than of all his brothers and sisters, with their better regulated lives—of everyone, indeed, except his mother, to whom she was devoted.

I gathered that by far the greatest imbroglio (one could not say *scandal*, but difficulty is altogether too mild a word for it) in which Carey had been involved, was a tremendous love-affair with an Italian *prima donna* of international fame. For two years he had lived with Forelli in a house in Welbeck Street, and during those few months there had arisen a succession of tempests and hurricanes, born of the hot suns of her native Neapolitan country, and often culminating in episodes of intense strangeness and absurdity.

Always bounded by the conventions of the Italian operatic form, limited to weeping, storming and threats of suicide, even to the pretence of madness, they were followed by scenes excruciatingly sweet, for all that their airs were yet unformulated, but nevertheless peculiarly unsuited to the social life of the English capital, and the quiet of the London clubs. (I mentioned clubs advisedly

because on several occasions Forelli invaded the upholstered seclusion of the Mausoleum in quest of Carey, and had had to be barred from a search of its cloistral apartments by an unspeakably shocked, if comprehending, hall-porter.)

The effect of this upon his relatives can be imagined. They had accused him of bringing scandal on the family, and of neglecting his affairs in the City. Accordingly, Miss Pomfret had often been designated to approach him with suggestions of reform. But, as it happened, Miss Pomfret was, rather surprisingly, a great lover of grand opera; which, together with racing, were the twin lights of her life. Moreover, Forelli had taken a great liking to her, and this flattered such an amateur . . . Indeed, in only two matters had Miss Pomfret stood against the lovers; she blamed him for causing continual worry to his mother, and she did not want them to marry. ("It wouldn't do.") But in any case, nothing would have persuaded Forelli to marry him, and this had been in fact—though his relatives were too proud to believe it—the most frequent cause of the quarrels between them.

Opera has fallen low in man's esteem, and no one now, I am aware, ever falls in love with a *prima donna*, but in those halcyon days of waists and bustles and bonnets, of hansom-cabs and top hats and frock-coats, when life was serene and unruffled except for the disturbances that you, as an individual, chose to make for your own diversion, nightingales were lovely of feather, as of voice. Into the brief space of their singing lives, they crammed whole careers of artistic and amorous experience. When, for an immense fee, paid in gold sovereigns, such a diva consented to sing at a private house, at the mere opening of her lips, talk would die away as though the archangel of music himself had entered the room and clapped his wings for silence. And the crowds that applauded her singing, would be interested, equally, in the events of her private existence, would be in possession of a great many true, as well as false details, and would discuss them eagerly. Every night elegant, ardent young amateurs waited outside the stage door to see Forelli emerge, and drive off with Carey in his private hansom, and nearly every day, too, he could be seen attending her in the Park, or escorting her through a restaurant with something of the pride of a drumming peacock. Bouquets and messages, lyres and harps and wreaths of roses and carnations, arrived for her at all hours. And these tributes helped to charge the atmosphere suitably for scenes of passion in real life.

In spite of their reasonless and perpetual differences, in spite of incongruity, in spite of her willingness to live with, and yet steadfast refusal to marry, him, each had been in reality devoted to the other. Carey was in love with her voice, as much as her person,

and for him she would sing as for no one else. Notwithstanding frequent ludicrous and painful situations there had existed in their relationship a quality, not only genuine, but tragic and unforgettable, and this Miss Pomfret had seen for herself and somehow managed to convey to me, even after the passing of many years. Here, then, in the drawing-room of his house in Welbeck Street, the turmoil of both their lives had spent itself (for, being a born *prima donna*, she preferred scenes set in the drawing-room to, as it were, bedroom scenes), and had loved and quarrelled with a vehemence and ebullition unsuited to this city and its surroundings, had often parted for ever only to return, dove-like, within a few hours. Here, with her back to the huge piano smothered up in a Chinese shawl, with many objects standing upon it, she had practised her parts, and trilled her joys and griefs in coloratura.

Miss Pomfret described the room well, could even remember the identity of some of the silver-framed, enthusiastically-autographed portraits of tenors with whom Forelli had sung, for she had often been sent there with messages from anxious relatives, or had been summoned by one or other of the lovers themselves. Evidently Carey had furnished it for his mistress with an ostentation born of the recent romances of Ouida and of the influence of Sarah Bernhardt, had filled it with arabesque hangings, with Persian rugs and flowers and palm-trees, with bronzes and fine pictures, ancient and modern, and Forelli, for her part, had added operatic trophies, crowns and sheaves of flowers, photographs of elephantine tenors in armour, or with lace collars and hats crowned with flowing feathers. Certainly for him, the place had been charged with vital vibrations such as he was never to give out, or receive, again. The battery, the dynamo of his soul, had been, for those two short years, working at its highest pressure. After that, he became the shell I knew.

Eventually the lovers had quarrelled and really parted for good, much to the satisfaction of all concerned, except themselves. And not long after, Forelli had died in Paris, still in the height of her powers and her celebrity, so that only the echo of that golden voice lingered in the minds of men.

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Miss Pomfret told me first of Carey's death. He had been nearly seventy—a good span, I suppose: but somehow, all his qualities, physical and mental, had appeared to be specifically calculated to support him into extreme old age, so that the news came as a shock to his friends. Though, as I perceived, she deeply felt his loss, and his sufferings, yet, reverting again to her Elizabethan character,



she could not help manifesting something of Webster's fascinated delight in death. She showed herself determined, in spite—or, perhaps, because—of my affection for him, to spare me no detail of Carey's final distress and dissolution. One could almost hear in her voice, as she talked, the rhythm of the poet's lines

“Of what is't fools make such vain keeping?  
Sin their conception, their birth weeping,  
Their life a general mist of error,  
Their death a hideous storm of terror.”

When he sent for her, she had found him in a typically fashionable nursing-home, made up of several old houses, superficially altered. The lift, she had noticed, was hardly wide enough to hold her, but possessed a curious, long rectangular shape, just able to receive a coffin when it came down.

“Oh yes, he's getting on nicely,” the Sister had said in a “pleasant” voice cool and clear,” and much more ‘comfy’ than he would be at home . . . There's always a nurse with him, even at night, to cheer him up. And he's much less grumpy: quite affable to everyone now.”

Carey Totnell lay, propped up on pillows, in a large front-room on the first floor; rather dark, and to Miss Pomfret's way of thinking, “too cold-looking”, with its sanitary surfaces and enamelling. It contained too, a litter of pseudo-scientific apparatus, lamps and cylinders and bed-tables, and of spindly fittings in aluminium and steel, the uses of which remain fortunately unknown to the lay mind. “Why, the very bed 'e lay h'in, 'ad more the look to me of a dentist's chair, than a Christian bed”, Miss Pomfret remarked to me . . . Nevertheless, she had rather liked the room, it had seemed in some way familiar and, in consequence, comfortable and not to be feared.

But she was shocked at the change she saw in the invalid, for he had paid her one of his usual visits, apparently in his normal health, only a few evenings previously. Carey had betrayed from the first, it seems, “that nasty blue look,” his voice had come from far away when he spoke, his nails “'ad no life in them,” and his hands kept plucking at the sheets; all these symptoms being well-known harbingers of death in the system of divining which she had projected for herself. “You'll never come h'out of 'ere, except a corpse, laid h'out flat in that lift, my man, 'h'I said to myself,” she added, “but, of course, I didn't let 'im see anything. h'I couldn't 'elp crying a little, and jest said, ‘Oh, Mr. Carey, dear, to think of seeing you *like this!*’”

The Sister had first turned the nurse out of the room, then, after

indulging in a miniature power-drive, patting and tugging at the pillows which he had contrived at last to make comfortable for himself, and pulling cords for windows and ventilators, she had squared her chin, saying "Now I'll go. I know I can trust you not to tire the patient or stay too long," and had herself left them.

At once, Carey had turned his face to Miss Pomfret, and said (he seemed to have to make an effort, she had thought, even to speak) — "Mary, my old friend, I'm a dying man. I know. It is only a matter of hours, not of days . . . So I wanted to see you once again, to thank you for everything you've done for me, always . . . and to ask you one question . . . You've seen so much of the course of my life: do you recognize this room?" . . . And then, as she looked round, she had understood; the enamelled cornices and doors, the distempered walls, the metal furniture, had taken on other colours, other lines. A gold-lacquered paper flowered again over the walls, a Chinese screen stood in front of the door, a *Symphony in White*, by Whistler, hung over the mantelpiece (now filled in, to hold an electric heater). In the far corner, on the muffled piano, stood rows of silver-framed photographs of Forelli in the rôles of *Carmen*, *La Sonnambula*, *Lucia* and a hundred other operatic heroines, or of mellifluous male singers decked for their parts, and on the tables, the vases of sick-room flowers had been ousted for the instant by vast, formal trophies of roses, orchids and lilies . . . He lay now dying in the very room of the very house in which his life had been crowned and consumed.

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He told her that he had fought—as she had been certain he would—against the idea of leaving Albany at all. But the doctor had ordered him to be taken at once in a motor-ambulance to his favourite nursing-home. Carey had not even been told where it was situated, and had felt too ill to ask questions. On arrival, when the old atmosphere had begun to distil itself round him in the room, he had felt sure that this was the result of his fever: but during the night, as he lay awake there, he had become convinced, on the contrary, of its reality. And a curious mingled sense of comfort and inquietude had assailed him . . . However, the slight effort of describing his feelings evidently tired him out, and as he seemed to be growing sleepy, Miss Pomfret had soon left him.

Next morning she had returned again to see him. But this time he did not know her . . . He was apparently talking Italian to someone on the other side of the bed. She tried to make out what he was saying, but it was no use: she only knew a few words of Italian. Then he fell silent again, intent, as though listening . . .

## TRUE LOVERS KNOT

And was it her imagination, she wondered, or did she really distinguish just for a moment, a coloratura trill, high up and far away, almost out of hearing? . . . She wished her ears had been sharper, for it sounded, oh beautiful; heavenly, you might say.

Probably it was a gramophone or wireless somewhere near by. You couldn't get away from them nowadays. But she was never sure.



## ON READING AMERICAN FICTION

BY D. W. BROGAN

IT is over a century since Sydney Smith, in the brisk dogmatic fashion that became an *Edinburgh Reviewer*, announced that no one read an American book. Of course that was simply the heightened way of putting things that was the style imposed on the writers of the great Whig tribunal of letters but, despite laudable efforts by *Blackwood's*, the literary relations between the Mother Country and her bumptious offspring were one-sided. Americans read innumerable English books, not only the classics but the contemporary stars of the literary firmament. Dickens had as many readers in America as at home and, as Oliver Wendell Holmes sadly noted, Martin Tupper had more. On both sides of the Atlantic the absence of a copyright agreement made it cheaper for the reader to study the literature of the other half of the English-speaking world than it was to study the products of his own hemisphere, but the literary balance of payments, if there had been any, would have been markedly in favour of the Mother Country. Eager citizens of the Brave New World awaited the latest products of the literary genius of the effete monarchy whose sway they had cast off and Jefferson Brick read and, possibly, recognized himself in the writings of Mr. Dickens—without any material profit to Mr. Dickens as that candid businessman of letters pointed out with some heat.

Of course the traffic was not entirely one-way. Washington Irving provided not merely agreeable and flattering *pastiches* of Addison but, in *Rip van Winkle*, added to the corpus of childish legend and with the *Leatherstocking* novels of Cooper there entered the literature of the English-speaking world one of the great themes of popular diversion. As much as the Arthurian legend of the Middle Ages, the *matière d'Amérique* became common property. And even in the England of 1940 it is possible to see in the fields and waste-lands round the housing estates, little boys with feathers in their hair and bows in their hands, doing the best they can to be Blackfeet and Sioux and, where raw materials permit, with fire and amateur wigwams made of old boxes, adding to the heart-warming illusion that they are on the trail of the Paleface. Cooper and his disciples made one part of American experience common

property to the youth of both countries—indeed to the youth of both continents, for at least one eminent French lawyer learned English so that he might read of the deeds of the Braves, since his rigorous father forbade him to read of them in French, but was willing to overlook the literary defects of the *genre* if it aided in the acquiring of a command of another language.

Nor was contemporary American literature altogether neglected. In *Little Women* New England produced a classic and, even to-day, the "Provincial Lady" has gone on pilgrimage to Louisa Alcott's shrine. And to cite a greater name, many more Englishmen than the hero of *Trent's Last Case* could have replied if asked if they knew *Huckleberry Finn*, "Do I know my own name?". Yet these exceptions only tested, without breaking the rule. It may be said with some confidence that of the vast bulk of American literature, the English reader knew little or nothing and a few brilliant exceptions, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or *Helen's Babies*, remained brilliant exceptions. There is, of course, a possible defence of this neglect, if a defence be thought necessary. American literature, in bulk, was anæmic, a feeble copy of English models; its authors unwilling, despite Emerson's counsels, to give up trying to import nightingales into the American fauna and studiously ignoring the existence of poison ivy in the American flora. Augustine Birrell noted rather tartly that even so urbane and witty a man as the elder Oliver Wendell Holmes strained our patience too much when he tried to illustrate points of literary practice, not merely from admitted masters, but from dim American imitators of them. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* was certainly not the attitude of the British critic to the hardworking if uninspired literary gentlemen of New York and Boston. Willis and Paulding, indeed, who were they? And, to-day, few Americans who have not "concentrated" in American literature at college could reply confidently. Time has justified the supercilious Britons. These pinchbeck authors have proved a good deal less enduring than brass. So have many of ours, but we have many more genuine brass specimens, far fewer Brummagem geniuses in proportion than American literature has had until very modern times. The English reader who neglected American contributions to what Mr. Mencken in his elephantine and engaging manner calls "beautiful letters," did not miss much. The real stars, Hawthorne, Whitman and the rest were not neglected or if they were, as happened with Melville, were no more neglected in England than in America.

Fundamentally this situation had not changed by 1914. There were a number of American novelists who had acquired critical or popular reputations, James and Mrs. Wharton, Ellen Glasgow and Mary Johnson, Robert W. Chambers and the American Winston

Churchill, Howells and Booth Tarkington. But compared to Shaw and Wells, Barrie and Belloc, Bennett and Chesterton, Conrad and Hardy to name only a few of the English team, the Americans were like a scratch cricket eleven or a modern cabinet, nearly all tail.

That is all changed. Without descending to the petty verifications of statistics, it may be asserted with some confidence that the balance of literary exports is now on the American side, that there are more American first-raters or, at any rate, best-sellers than there are English rivals to them. There are three living American Nobel prize winners in the field of literature; there are no English ones. The judgment of Sweden may not be infallible in literature any more than in finance or war, but that such a judgment should be possible at all is worth noting. Of course the popularity and prestige of American literature, especially in the field of fiction, is only one aspect of a general growth of American prestige. From the last post-war period, America has rivalled Russia as a modern Utopia; whether as the home of technology, of the "secret of high wages", of the movies, of popular music, of Harvard or of Hollywood, the United States has filled the imaginations of the educated classes as the vision of "America the Golden" had long filled the imaginations of European proletarians, anxious to escape from their chains or to have them gilded more than was usual in Düsseldorf or Glasgow. Long before Hollywood had become the modern Thebaïd, with Messrs. Huxley and Heard as joint St. Antonies, it has been the Abbey of Thélème for Europe as well as for America. Any source of information about the background of this enchanted scene was welcome. New York, Miami, Catalina Island, were more familiar to the eyes of the world than any other cities or regions had ever been and, when not looking at America, it was natural to be reading about it. With the coming of the talkies the American hold on our imagination grew, for our songs as well as our stories came from the same factory and Fletcher of Saltoun's wise friend would have found Messrs. Cole Porter and Jerome Kern worthy of the most respectful attention. *Time* and *Life* and still more the *New Yorker* illustrate the growth of American prestige. Coinages like "socialite" are laboriously copied in a social context that makes the literal imitation merely silly. Gone are days when an American magazine existed entirely on pirated English contributions. With us are the days when naive imitations of American methods are the solution for all problems of popular journalism, when a popular daily has thought it smart to give the title "I Cover the Waterfront" to what had hitherto been known as "Harbour News" and when it is no uncommon sight in an Oxford Common or a Cambridge Combination room to see a don struggling desperately with the jests of the



*New Yorker* and, if under forty, almost as ashamed to admit his inability to grapple with Peter Arno as he would have been ashamed, a generation ago, to fail to catch the point of a joke from Aristophanes.

With smart young people America is as much the thing as England was in the days of Parisian Anglomania, when Berlioz was young. "Swing" is as much a safe topic of vague conversation in bright undergraduate circles as Proust or Cézanne were fifteen years ago. Artie Shaw and Wing Manone, Benny Goodman and Archie Templeton, their merits and their vices, especially their rival claims to æsthetic purity, are subjects for warm debate and to have heard "Stuff" Smith at the Onyx is to have a claim on the tolerance of the sophisticated young that could not be made even on the basis of the possession of a season ticket for the best seats at Glyndebourne. Indeed, since there is nothing like a broad assertion, it is here asserted that American life and culture is a main interest of all the bright young things not absorbed in the Talmudics of Marxism and the diversion of some who are. But it is not merely the bright young things who provide the market for the floods of American fiction with which our sagacious publishers irrigate our arid lands. The general reading public, free from the chains of *snobisme* in intellectual matters if in no other, provides the main market for the retailer of American fiction.

But to talk of American fiction in general is to simplify the problem of why the demand for it is so great. *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Headed for a Hearse*, *Northwest Passage*, *Kitty Foyle*, to name some recent successes, have little in common except that they are books by Americans about American themes. There is a market for the American social novel, the picture of contemporary America, for the American "tough" novel, for the American love story. But probably the readers who enjoy all four types equally are few and perverted, persons to whom the American taste on the palate is so strong that any dish with that flavouring is delicious. Contemplating the classification of American fiction given above, the chronicler is more baffled to account for the popularity of the American historical novel than for the success of any other line offered by the industry on the British market. No fact is better established in the publishing world than that the British public do not want to read American history; the British man in the street, the critic, the statesman are alike content to get along with complete ignorance of the history of the United States or to make shift with a few commonplace and almost always erroneous impressions. Allusions to American history in the public prints reveal a profound and complacent ignorance that

cannot be easily paralleled. Persons who know nothing of the history of Yugoslavia do not, as a rule, make airy allusions to the history of that country, allusions which give them away at once. That kind of complacent ignorance we leave to our rulers. But persons who will firmly refuse to learn even the elements of American history from a text-book, will cheerfully read very long, detailed and often highly informative historical narratives cast in the form of fiction. With all allowances made for the talents of the best practitioners, such as Mr. Roberts, and even when all allowance is made for the curious sauces with which these historical dishes are sometimes served up, ("curious" being used, as it was used by Mr. John Mair, in its technical bookseller's catalogue sense), it is surprizing that America, from the Revolution to the Civil War, should now be what Scotland was in Scott's time, the best background for fictional history. From this class *Gone With the Wind* should be excepted. The success of that book is, as Americans put it, "one of those things", an event as decisive and unpredictable as a great flood or a great drought. Scarlett O'Hara could perform her tricks in any environment and although compared to some earlier fictional versions of the Reconstruction period such as *Red Rock*, G.W.T.W. is a model of scholarship, its chief appeal is not historical. There is enough truth in the poet's view that "every woman is at heart a rake" to have made the story of Rhett and Scarlett a sure-fire hit even if set in Wigan.

Can it be that the success of American historical fiction, where it is not merely a renewal of the success of Cooper with the forest and the prairie as the new Sherwood Forest of our boyish thought, is due to the unpleasant state of Europe? It is hard to-day to read history or historical novels without falling into day dreams of which the chief charm is the chance they give one of strangling most of the begetters of our present troubles at birth! It is possible to read of American generals and politicians making love and war without being pricked by the painful thought that all of their public activities have had immediate unpleasant consequences for us. In the Never Never Land of American history, the doughty deeds of the heroes are not for us represented by conscription, income-tax demands, a profound sense of insecurity and danger.

It is easier to understand the vogue of the American sociological novel. We want to know about this strange and dazzling country. We may lament as romantics the fact that,

"Across the plains where once there roamed the Indian and the Scout,  
The Swede with alcoholic breath set rows of cabbages out".

But the son of the Swede, risen from cabbages and, if alcoholic, alcoholic in a more refined fashion, can have a lot to tell us about life in the cities that have, like Mr. Sinclair Lewis's Zenith, thrust

their topless towers to the sky from sites where three generations ago, there were only the trader's hut and the tepees of the savages. The America of to-day is made more comprehensible to us by Mr. Lewis, by Mr. Horgan, by Mr. Steinbeck, by Mr. Faulkner, by Mr. Caldwell, by Mr. Weidman and by many less competent describers of the American scene. American family life among the bourgeoisie and among the share croppers of Georgia, among Iowa farmers and New York garment makers; we are ready, it appears, to learn a lot about all of them. We are even willing to learn a lot from that very bogus literary *genre*, the dynastic 'epic' or 'saga' where an industrious young man, with the aid of a file of Sears Roebuck catalogues, a file of *Harper's Bazaar* and a justified trust in the uncritical ignorance of his audience, can illustrate the rise and fall of American society. The author need have no real powers as a novelist, he need not even (if one may judge from a recent and successful specimen) possess the minimum command of mere chronology that the reader is surely entitled to expect. But as long as the usual ingredients are present, sex, business, remarks on furniture and dress and vague rumblings-off, based on the technique of the "at that moment" school of historians, the British reader will patiently plough through a family chronicle which he could easily see through were the locale Wolverhampton and not Wichita.

Some of these novels are, indeed, only valuable as sociological descriptions. If you want to learn about the working of the mail-order business you can read a novel written to that end, a novel whose human beings are singularly dull and unindividualized. Miss Ruth McKenney admired of all readers of *The New Yorker* is wiser than Mr. Halper, the author of *The Chute*. Miss McKenney writes about "My Sister Eileen" with her right hand and about labour problems in Akron, Ohio, with her left. The creator of Hyman Kaplan, as a serious sociological student of the American press, writes under his own name, with no fictional fig leaf over the bare facts. If you want to understand modern American Society you can learn more from the objective and factual studies of "Middle-town" made by Mr. and Mrs. Lynd than from a bale of novels whose only real justification is the pill of information hidden beneath the jam of a love story or at any rate a sex story.

Where the novelist brings real imaginative power to bear, as is done by Mr. Steinbeck and Mr. Caldwell then the propagandist and informative side of their work is given a power it would not otherwise have had. No mere accurate description of the working of the Fugitive Slave Law, no economic study of the fate of the migrating "Okies" in California could have done what *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *The Grapes of Wrath* did—put a triumphant economic and social order on the defensive. But for one Mrs. Stowe or one Mr.



Steinbeck, there are a dozen sociological novelists who would make fair Ph.D's, but who make very poor novelists. Yet poor as they are they read here as well as in the United States. Why?

Because they write about something: the organization of trade unions, the social effects of the emigration to American soil, the clash of races, the conflict of classes and creeds. It is true that we have writers who, as well as all but the best Americans, deal with real topics, who escape from the crippling conventions of the English class structure. *Love on the Dole* in one way, the lighter life of the new industrial settlements of the Great West Road as revealed to us by Mr. McGraw in another, do what the Americans set out to do. But the popularity of the American, may be due to the fact that our consciences are not pricked by the woes of the Okies as they might be by the wrongs of the "Special Areas"; we can read *The Grapes of Wrath* with the comforting feeling that we cannot do anything about it. But that is not the whole story. Our fiction is not as frivolous as our stage, but it is too frivolous all the same.

The limitations of English practice that help to make the market for American fiction are beautifully illustrated in that field where mass production is commonest, the crime story. The mere puzzle story, what the Americans call the "Whodunit," is bound to be a highly artificial *genre*. As Mr. Ogden Nash has recently pointed out, most detective stories would be a great deal shorter if the "Had I But Known" device were barred, the failure of the essential witness to tell all in time to save the detective and the reader a great deal of trouble. To get round this difficulty, all sorts of devices have to be employed, the chief one being building up the character of the detective in the fashion rightly condemned by E. C. Bentley. When it comes to bogus characterization, to the consecrated devices which attempt to conceal the fact that a short story is being spun out to 220 pages, the American practitioners are just as maddening as the English. Fictional detectives who ask to be hit sharply on the head with a blunt instrument are common on both sides of the Atlantic. And the writers who do manage to be entertaining, as well as more or less puzzling, are not all American. Miss Georgette Heyer can do the bright conversation trick as well as Mr. Marco Page, which is meant to be praise for both of them. But the American writer can take advantage of his freedom in a way barred to the English.

First of all he is freer in the matter of locale. Governed by rules as rigid as those of cricket, the English detective story writer is pinned down to London and the South of England—and abroad. Here the precedent has been set by Holmes. He worked for the Pope and the Royal Family of Holland, visited Khartoum and

Mecca when both were barred to the infidel, but he never took a case north of Trent, except in the one instance of the visit to "The Priory School" which seems to have been near Chesterfield. The living "mistress of them that know", Mrs. Christie, observes the same rule; Poirot has detected in Mesopotamia but not in Manchester. What Holmes and Poirot do, does not matter; they need not abide our questions. But other are less free and the convention that murder takes place in London or the home counties, usually only among super-tax payers and in a general atmosphere of restrained gentility is trying. Mr. Crofts' Inspector French travels a good deal and the Coles Mr. Wilson's cases sometimes involve slightly critical views of the social order, but that is about all. The American detective is not so bound. Mr. Queen, Mr. Vance, the latter happily gone to his reward, practised as a rule in New York, but Cape Cod, Dallas, Los Angeles, even Philadelphia have all eminent fictional sleuths in steady employment. Then the American authors, as a class, realize with De Quincey that murder, if not serious in itself, often leads to open breaches of decorum and morality. Too often in an English detective story, it is hard to regard the murder as more than a technical device for beginning the game. The American murderer and murderess (and often the detective into the bargain) are quite often definitely *not nice*.

This point is better illustrated from another popular branch of crime fiction, the "tough" story. The tough story of what Mr. Cyril Connolly has called "They Shoot Postmen Don't They?" type, in which the authorship of the crime is not in question, merges easily into the tough detective story in which the authorship of the crime is discovered after a series of assaults, bumpings-off, torture scenes with as much sex and soaking thrown in as the readers can stand (or maybe as the author can stand; the reader can stand a lot). This *genre* is so popular that we now have English imitations of it. But these imitations suffer from a double weakness. The authors lack gusto and conviction; their heroes and villains tend to be heroes and cads in the tradition of *The Magnet*, only the authors are much less good story tellers than is Mr. Frank Richards. The English tough detectives, if they would not break down and weep at the sight of a picture of their deceased mothers, would definitely be embarrassed and blushing at the thought of the descent on them of their headmasters. No such weaknesses cramp the style of the American detectives. Of course all American authors gain something from the extraordinary breakdown in the taboos once common to both branches of the language. Gone are the not very distant days when, as it was said, American authors had to pretend that they thought adultery meant putting sand in sugar.

Indeed, liberty has become a new servitude. As the lyric poet puts it,

"Good authors, too, who once knew better words,  
Now only use four letter words.  
Writing prose  
Anything goes."

A linguistic convention of brutal candour has grown up, the charm of euphemism is lost. Nor is language all. Jokes of a bold type that were all right once, threaten to become stereotyped. One, in particular, which was in place when used by the greatest master of this school, Mr. Jonathan Latimer, has since been worked to death by less skilful practitioners; it threatens to become as regular a device as the umbilicus in the early work of Walt Disney. But if you propose to supply 'toughness', it is idle to try to provide it and, at the same time, to write a book that a solicitous young woman can let her mother read. It can't be done and should not be tried. To make a good "tough" crime story, sadism is not enough; normal sex must have its place, however distressing this fact may be to English gentlemen.

The real advantage of the American crime story writer over his British competitor is more serious. America provides better raw material. Of course, for the classical family murder we can hold our own with anybody. Glasgow with its magnificent record is, in itself, enough to enable us to look American boasters in the eye. But for the fast-moving shooting, knifing murder, America is an easy winner. Our crime kings who are demonstrating mathematical propositions in one part of London while their victims are murdered in another, require a lot of simple faith in the reader. But many a busy citizen of Chicago who was poking his nose into Mr. Capone's business *did* die of lead-poisoning while that master was relaxing in his little winter place in Florida. In English detective fiction witnesses are often removed just as they are about to tell all. But does that often happen in real life? In America, such a solution of the problem of dragging the story out is far from exciting incredulity. How to keep your witnesses alive until they can testify is a real problem for an American detective or District Attorney. Murder rings are common in English fiction—but there is a real one being uncovered in Brooklyn at this moment. It is true that a writer of exceptional talent can do a great deal with very little. Mr. Graham Greene showed that in *Brighton Rock*, where the actual crime would not have made the back pages of the Chicago press when the local gang business was brisk. In America, no crime writer need be afraid of running too far ahead of fact. Indeed, fact may run after him. The story of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* has since been imitated in real life in the city and state



where the fictional version was laid! English detectives should continue to play cricket; let Americans play baseball, facing all the risks of the game, the bomb, the blonde, the bed.

In crime stories, as in more serious branches of the art, part of the popularity of American fiction is due to its close relation to reality. It is true that the English reader—and reviewer—does not always appreciate the degree to which he is being given sociological information about the state of Kansas City under the Pendergast machine, or the social life of Chicago's suburbs. For instance, no English reviewer, as far as I saw, noted the main theme of Mr. Christopher Morley's *Kitty Foyle*. That book was a great success in America, not merely because it was an ingenious re-telling of the old, old story of King Cophetua with a Hindle Wakes twist. It was a success at least as much for the light it cast on the life of the "Main Line" families of Philadelphia. That society is, or was, a mystery to the average American. Its Bostonian counterpart was not, for the best families of Boston are not merely exclusive, they are highly literate and expository. The Lowells may speak only to God but they have no objection to having their conversation overheard. Before such modern ironical accounts of the First Families of Boston, such as *The Late George Apley*, there was *The Education of Henry Adams*. But Philadelphia was another matter. Some fugitives from the "Main Line" chain gang like the present American ambassador in Paris tried to tell all. But although *It's Not Done* is a good political novel, it is too hostile to the society it describes to give the reader much sympathetic interest in it. When Edward VII. as Prince of Wales visited Philadelphia in 1860, he shocked society there by asking casually "What is a Biddle". America waited two generations for an answer, but now it knows what the Philadelphia Guermantes are like. Mr. Morley, that is, was doing the work of a Malinowski or a Firth, as much as the work of a pure novelist and America was grateful to him, although few English readers saw the point, perhaps because they did not realize how fantastic in American eyes was a community in which cricket was taken seriously!

It is not maintained, then, that the popularity of American fiction is necessarily due to a conscious thirst for information; what it is that makes American fiction alive—and so readable—often escapes the English reader. But consciously or unconsciously, he cannot help learning a great deal about America, which is something new. With the films, the American picture papers, the American novel, English knowledge of America is greater than it has ever been. Yet that may not make for sympathy or understanding, for the America displayed is often a good deal less

attractive than a more balanced picture would reveal. The America revealed does not, as a rule, evoke warm emotions as was sometimes done in the past. A distinguished Englishman, two generations ago, complained after a visit to America that what he missed was the pleasure of association, the pleasure which Italy and France gave so abundantly. Indeed, he asserted, he only once got that pleasure; crossing a stream in Florida he asked the conductor of the train its name. "Why, that's the Swanee River". No modern American writer has done what Stephen Foster did for that visitor or what Mark Twain did for this writer when I stood on the bank of the Mississippi at Hannibal, Missouri whence Huck Finn set off on his immortal journey.

## THE LATER YEATS

BY RICHARD CHURCH

**F**IFTY years ago, when W. B. Yeats was a young man of twenty-three, he wrote the following words in the course of a review of a book of verse long since forgotten. "When a literature is old it grows so indirect and complex that it is only a possession for the few: to read it well is a difficult pursuit, like playing the fiddle; for it one needs especial training."

English literature is certainly at the stage described by that far-seeing young poet. And in its latter half-century it has aged rapidly, so that at present, while the storm rages, all it can do is to sit huddled in a corner under the chimney, with a glass of warming oblivion by its side. This allegory, at least, may be used of our poetry to-day. The small group of poets who did show signs of getting into touch with the general reading public—and it did little more than that—has been silenced by the war. But it is still too soon to dogmatize about that.

With the young men silent, and Yeats dead, there is an emptiness, a silence. How, and when will it be broken? We don't know. We can only look back; listen back with memory's ear. And what recurs to us most clearly, almost overwhelmingly, is the giant figure of Yeats. It is Yeats as an old man, savage in his struggle with Time, beating back the tide with great gestures of vituperation, his white hair blowing in the wind, one eye only visible, the other blacked-out with an opaque lens; the green stone of his signet ring flashing as he lifts his hand and clenches it against the enemy.

It is a tragic picture, of a man discontented with his achievement, a man fighting more fiercely at the end than at the beginning of his life, a man with little fundamental pleasure in his fame. But it is also a triumphant picture, as we see the white-haired poet, sick and maimed, convulsed still with the fire of creative effort, straining still to the necessary labour of capturing the real phrase of poetry, and not a latterday literary simulacrum of it.

It is a recurring mystery, this of the swan-song. We note how frequently in the lives of poets there is a period of great productivity in youth, a lull during the years of maturity, and then another lyrical burst in old age. It is like the history of a summer day. Up comes the sun, with a slant fire throwing a wild illumination upon



the most ordinary of things; raising mists and veils, patching colours upon the drab, and shadow-patterns beyond the flattest objects. Then comes mid-day, with a vertical sun. Light pours over everything alike; flattens all things out, dries all things up. The very brightness of noon seems to concentrate into a kind of blue darkness, oppressive, ominous. No bird sings. But toward evening a breeze springs up, blows perfumes about, turns leaves to catch the oblique light. Birds break into song deeper, more lucid and prophetic than that of dawn. And the sun goes down in splendour, a magnificent solitary with no rival in the sky.

We have just witnessed such a sunset in the passing of Yeats. Was that solitariness an illusion put upon us by his old age? I do not think so. At the same time as he wrote those words about an ancient literature, he said also that "the modern author, if he be a man of genius, is a solitary; he does not know the ever-changing public well enough to be their servant. He cannot learn their convention; they must learn his. All that is greatest in modern literature is soliloquy, or, at most, words addressed to a few friends." It is true of his own career, for in spite of his success, and the early appreciation "of a few friends", his public was never big enough to bring him more than two hundred pounds a year until he was past fifty years of age.

I bring in this reference to money because what people want they will pay for. The Victorians wanted Tennyson's poems so much that publishers were glad to pay him a retaining fee of seven thousand a year on seven year contracts! The comparison is nicely ironic. Dr. Johnson would have appreciated it, and drawn from it a conclusion about the æsthetic value of the two poets' work. It also appears to offer some confirmation of Yeats's argument about "the modern author, if he be a man of genius".

So Yeats worked, unremunerated, through the heyday of his life, producing the long, swinging lyrics of his youth, and the plays about Irish heroes and demi-gods. But a time came, in the teens and twenties of the present century, when even the few grew weary of the Celtic twilight. Yeats's work began to pall. Derivative legends grew up round his name. He was called a poseur. A cruel critic wrote about the fur-lined overcoat with which he returned to Ireland after a successful lecture tour in America. Other critics, more deadly, attacked him because of his dallyings with Madame Blavatsky, his pseudo-orientalism, his dippings into esoterics and occultism. There were quarrels at the Abbey Theatre, and boy-cottings in Bloomsbury.

It was the noonday darkness. What was he really doing during this time? What was the significance of the obscure studies? And were they indeed sufficiently disinterested to be called

studies? I believe that one ought to look somewhat askance upon a poet's studies. He never studies for the sake of the subject, as a scholar should. He has an ulterior motive. Yeats says of himself "I remember some old man, a stranger to me, saying, 'I have watched you for the past half-hour and you have neither made a note nor read a word.' I am certain that everybody outside my own little circle who knew anything about me thought as did that cross old man, for I was arrogant, indolent, excitable."

It was the excitement of the bee, that pryer into rich volumes, who is always hard at work honeying his own hive. That was one reason for Yeats's studies in the occult. Another was that described by a critic recently, who said that "Yeats sensed that in the study of the occult, man might surprise the secret that would free him from the despotism of unhappiness".

The search led the poet into many dark places, and it threw strange obscurations across his poetry when he began to sing again. Much discussion has gone on among the critics about this element in his verse. They called it a new element, and some blamed his studies for it. Others, more reverent, proceeded to exegesis, timidly believing that where there is obscurity there must be virtue. One volume in particular, *The Tower*, published in 1928, came with such force of intellectual novelty that critics and public together were surprised into a new attention to the poet whom they had begun to take for granted. The old gods of Ireland were still to be found in this book; but they had thrown off their fancy dress, their starry brooches and scabbards. They were now elemental monsters of the naked mind, too near and too active to be merely symbols of the poet's agony. They stood about him like a crowd of living and angry men, hiding him for the time being. He was certainly lost in the figures which he had conjured. He had caught himself up in the machinery of living, and had to summon these literary giants out of his past to extricate him.

A man in his own secret meditation  
Is lost amid the labyrinth that he has made  
In art or politics;  
Some platonist affirms that in the station  
Where we should cast off body and trade  
The ancient habit sticks,  
And that if our works could  
But vanish with our breath  
That were a lucky death,  
For triumph can but mar our solitude.

Still that harping on solitude. And what makes a man a solitary? It is because he has a secret which he wishes to preserve. Yeats's secret was the knowledge that the way he made his poetry was not the way the critics thought he made it. He took a

malicious delight in fostering this misbelief. He heard the loud chatter of his disciples dissertating upon his enormous scholarship, his infinite pains. He encouraged the legend about the making of one quatrain occupying a whole morning of exhausting labour. The process is recognizable. Browning had already patented it. He too made a cult of his old age and its wisdom and erudition, delighting to tease the Browning Society with posers in verse. In consequence, much of his later work is now unreadable. But at the very end his genius—another word for simplicity and native innocence—broke through this web of sophistication and vanity and malice, and in *Fifine at the Fair* he sang as lucidly as ever he had done in his youth.

Yeats never sank quite so deeply into self-obscurantism. Even in his most tangled work, in his despair and fear at the approach of old age, the smoke screen of intellectual snobbery which he threw round himself was never thick enough to hide the figure at the core. In the book *The Tower* we find again and again flashes of a severe simplicity which really do utilize all that mental stuff, and make it terrible with the fierce direction of the poet. Such moments were already prophetic. They showed him pre-occupied not only with his own doom, but the doom of European civilization. Indeed, that latter premonition was with him all his life. He was always a savage critic of the machine and its vulgarizing and brutalizing influence. No artist has ever so much hated mass production, the technique by which the machine threatens to destroy the flower of human nature. To-day, we see it at work, with thousands of German tanks treading over France, and the theories of the Nazi shouting from a box in every household in the Old World and the New.

In his youth he spoke of these things; "the struggle of labour and capital, of mysticism and science, and many another contest now but dimly foreshadowed, will more and more absorb or deafen into silence all such cloistered lives—the products of periods of rest between two worlds, 'one dead, one powerless to be born'." We are now standing at that deathbed. And tomorrow we shall have to turn, those of us who remain, and work as midwives at the powerless birth which Yeats foresaw fifty years ago. The lament which runs through all his lifework, the source of its anger and sorrow, are to be found in this vision, which never left him.

In pity for man's darkening thought  
He walked that room and issued thence  
In Galilean turbulence ;  
The Babylonian Starlight brought  
A fabulous, formless darkness in ;  
Odour of blood when Christ was slain



Made Plato's tolerance in vain  
And vain the Doric discipline.

Those last three lines, from *The Tower* volume, have a dreadful directness in their comment on what is happening in Europe to-day. They summarize the historical significance of the whole struggle; the attack on Christianity, on the individual soul, on gracious thought and instinct, on the free order of reason. Yeats's weakening physical force was already acting upon his pride, dissolving it away and bringing to the surface a harder self.

Bodily decrepitude is wisdom ; young  
We loved each other and were ignorant.

After *The Tower* came *The Winding Stair*, in which he threw aside all camouflage of intellectualism, and went straight back to reminiscence of his whole life as an artist. But the glancing backward was still done with a purpose, which was to warn the present generation of the coming catastrophe.

We were the last romantics—chose for theme  
Traditional sanctity and loveliness ;  
Whatever's written in what poets name  
The book of the people ; whatever most can bless  
The mind of man or elevate a rhyme ;  
But all is changed, that high horse riderless,  
Though mounted in that saddle Homer rode  
Where the swan drifts upon a darkening flood.

He sees it coming closer and closer, and it fills him with the conviction that he must do something active, beyond that making of poetry.

Although the summer sunlight gild  
Cloudy leafage of the sky,  
Or wintry moonlight sink the field  
In storm-scattered intricacy,  
I cannot look thereon,  
Responsibility so weighs me down.

We see him after this active in politics, speaking and commanding attention in the Irish Senate. And we watch him withdrawing in disgust from the commerce of it. It was at this time that I saw something of him, and had many talks with him in London. On one occasion he said something which showed me into the secret that made his solitude, and which makes the solitude of all true poets. "The trouble with the young English poets of to-day", he said, "is that they are too conscientious. They don't trust enough to luck". It looks a simple saying. But it contains the unjust truth about the art of poetry. It reveals how unfair is the compact between the poet and his Daemon; the tricks they get up to between them. It shows why the poet is so shy of the erudite, and why he pours scorn on "remote ineffectual dons". It shows too why

poets are crazy creatures, consumed with worry about where the next word is coming from, agonizing lest they have said their last magic phrase, dreading lest their elusive partner has let them down. It explains, too, Yeats's lifelong devotion to William Blake, and his wilful pleasure in *The Prophetic Books*, those poetic eloquences which have not quite come off. Yeats at last realized the blindness of man, the endowment of chance, the dependence upon something which he is never able to command, the life of rule-of-thumb, of trial and error, a poet living like a gardener or a sailor, at the mercy of the elements.

A living man is blind and drinks his drop.  
 What matter if the ditches are impure ?  
 What matter if I live it all once more ?  
 Endure that toil of growing up ;  
 The ignominy of boyhood ; the distress  
 Of boyhood changing into man ;  
 The unfinished man and his pain  
 Brought face to face with his own clumsiness.

I am content to follow to its source  
 Every event in action or in thought ;  
 Measure the lot ; forgive myself the lot ;  
 When such as I cast out remorse  
 So great a sweetness flows into the breast  
 We must laugh and we must sing,  
 We are blest by everything,  
 Everything we look upon is blest.

How dangerous it all is ; and how exhilarating. The perfumed winds of youth revive, the divine waywardness seizes upon the spirit, making disillusion itself a surprise and a delight. It is a state of chance and caprice which is native to Yeats. He had been so all his life, and all the affections and worldly poses as savant, cult-leader, deliberating theorist, were never able to overlay the innocent and the wilful creature, the poet. Did he ever trouble even to be consistent in his attitude to the world ? Only a few years ago, in his preface to the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, he left out war-poems, arguing that "passive suffering is not a theme for poetry". A storm of protest blew round him. But he did not reply. He had probably forgotten what he had said. Now, in his posthumous volume of *Last Poems, Last Plays*, he says

You that Mitchel's prayer have heard,  
 ' Send war in our time, O Lord ',  
 Know that when all words are said  
 And a man is fighting mad,  
 Something drops from eyes long blind,  
 He completes his partial mind,  
 For an instant stands at ease,  
 Laughs aloud, his heart at peace.  
 Even the wisest man grows tense

With some sort of violence  
 Before he can accomplish fate,  
 Know his work or choose his mate.

This last volume is astonishing in its poetic richness. Every poem in it is stark and memorable. He asks "why should not old men be mad?" Why not, indeed, if their madness produce such music as this. And what music is it? It is the music which has been native in him since he began to sing more than fifty year ago; a music wayward, dangerous, always hovering upon uncertainty, springing like a child's delights out of small but concrete things.

Those masterful images because complete  
 Grew in pure mind, but out of what began?  
 A mound of refuse or the sweepings of a street,  
 Old kettles, old bottles, and a broken can,  
 Old iron, old bones, old rags, that raving slut  
 Who keeps the till. Now that my ladder's gone,  
 I must lie down where all the ladders start,  
 In the foul rag-and-bone shop of the heart.

That is a fitting last word from a man whose whole life has been spent in a passionate curiosity, the curiosity which children know and lose, and which poets know and keep.

*(Previous articles on the work of modern poets—W. H. Davies, Walter de la Mare, Robert Frost—by Mr. Richard Church appeared in the January, March and May issues of THE FORTNIGHTLY. In his next article Mr. Church will write on the Poetry of Edmund Blunden).*



## EBB AND FLOW

BY STEPHEN GWYNN

**A** FRIEND said to me: "In another incarnation I must try not to love any country as I have loved France." Thousands in these islands will have felt what that expresses. Too much pain can come of such allegiance. Too much pain has come. First the fury of resentment at seeing all that refinement of beauty and intelligence, all that order of life, so simple and so skilful, entered and possessed by mechanized Calibans—glutting at once their greed and their hate. But then came worse when we saw France surrender, and we knew the pride that was broken there. This was the race that had held Verdun; and with a sure instinct those who were for surrender knew that France would accept that word only from the man who was Verdun incarnate. Then—for whatever god planned this tragedy knew all the springs of human nature—inevitably such a people, each man and woman of such a people, so torn with the horrors of humiliation, turned savage like a wounded tiger. We shall only be able to judge France fairly if we have gone through what France had to bear. When a man's very blood and bones are an offence to him, when he can hardly endure himself, he throws whatever blame he can wherever he can. Sir Robert Vansittart—one of the men who like Lord Tyrrell has been censured for too much love of France—put the terrible truth into words of a poem. "You hate us now." Who shall blame Pétain and Weygand if they felt that Great Britain, which accepted jointly with France the duty of defending Europe's freedom, had left to France too much of the burden? On the fatal day, six million Frenchmen were on foot to resist twelve million Germans, and they had with them less than half a million Englishmen. That is not the whole truth but it is as much of it as France in that hour could be expected to see.

Since then, tragedy, advancing relentlessly, has reached another climax in that action at Oran. British navy and army alike will sympathize with the dreadful sense of duty which constrained Admiral Gensoul to offer a hopeless resistance. It is too much to expect that French soldiers and sailors will sympathize with Admiral Somerville and his officers and men who had that shocking

necessity of crushing it. But for one thing I was thankful: Mr. Harold Nicolson, speaking in French to French listeners on the air, showed not only that an Englishman may be master of the French language but that he can be penetrated with the spirit of France. If anything could help to make Frenchmen feel what is felt for France by the best intelligences in this country, that address may have done it.

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Meanwhile the spirit of France utters itself whenever General de Gaulle addresses a listening world. Assuredly the French tongue —how different from the hysterical bellowings that reach us from Berlin—“*prête un beau clairon à la voix des héros.*” “*La Danse Devant l'Arche,*” from which that line comes, is the poetical testament of a young Jew, Henri Franck: it was put into my hands by a devout Huguenot who added to his gifts as a doctor a singular talent for reading French verse. How many racial strains are reconciled in the air itself of France “*subtil, léger, brillant!*” But let the young Hebrew evoke its landscape.

**Un beau  
Clairon**

Les limpides canaux sont couverts de péniches,  
Les marchés sont pleins d'oeufs, d'étoffe et de bétail,  
L'Eglise est près du pont qui passe la rivière  
Et devant la mairie un grand mail est planté.  
Le soir, le boulanger assis devant sa porte,  
Les bras nus sur son tablier plein de farine,  
Regarde la rentrée des gens et des troupeaux.

How often we have seen all that! how little we shall wish to see it till the last German is back to his proper lair! But those lines give only the outward body of France: this worshipper knows the spirit,—and knows its danger also. France has put away the faith for which France went crusading—

Mais l'autre foi, la foi que tu as mise au monde,  
Celle qui, née de toi, se répand dans l'Europe,  
Ta foi dans ta raison, ta foi dans la révolte,  
Vas-tu l'abandonner après l'avoir transmise?  
Ou bien, cruel affront, détestable agonie,  
Te faudra-t-il mourir de l'avoir suscitée?

What a prophecy! written twenty years ago when France was in the ugly mood that followed victory:—

La discorde est assise au centre de la ville,  
Et souffle avec fureur dans un clairon faussé:  
Le Parlement est sans vertu et sans pensée.

God knows how much too much truth is in that, and in the pages which end with the menace:—

On entend remuer à la frontière ouverte  
La lourde légion des Germains affamés.

Yet after painting a "*France languissante, âme diminuée*," he turns to a profession of faith:—

Mais je sais ta constance et ta grâce éternelle,  
 Et j'ai la foi que tu pourras ressusciter.  
 Ta voix dominera le trouble et les querelles,  
 Et tes fils s'uniront dans ta claire unité.  
 Le quatorze Juillet redeviendra splendide;  
 Du peuple endimanché la joie incoercible  
 Emplira tout Paris;  
 Les canons rouleront sur les quais de la ville,  
 Les soldats auront l'air vivant et juvénile  
 Des vainqueurs de Valmy!

I could not say what I and the like of me felt about France; but this young poet, dead and known to so few, has said it for us. There is only this to add. The lamps are out in France itself; on our side of the water General de Gaulle and his gallant friends keep some burning. But it is not from overseas that France can be saved; she will work out her own salvation on her own soil when the chance offers. Yet it may be granted to those who are outside France itself to create that chance by some action at some opportunity not yet foreseen. Till then, without a free France, there is no Europe.

Here in England one lives in the prose of heroism. It is difficult to realize that this solid good-natured people is bracing itself for an ordeal which imagination might well shrink from. But imagination is very wisely kept in check; and at intervals through the day a breath of refreshing romance reaches us in reports of what the young chivalry of the skies have been attempting—and accomplishing. Their deeds can be told, since they are here one moment, and the next, a hundred miles away. Naval action cannot be so freely chronicled. But that affair at Oran had at least certain aspects on which the mind can dwell with comfort. The appalling speed with which a naval squadron can destroy is not encouraging for prospective invaders; and the Italians who by their own report failed to reach the scene of action in time are perhaps reconciled to their disappointment. But the truth is Admiral Somerville was too quick for them. He will not always wish to avoid that meeting.

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What has happened in Rumania can have surprised no one: and it is not a state which has earned Europe's admiration. If the poor and the Jews are pressing back across the Pruth to get under Russian rule, that is no high testimonial to the former rulers of Bessarabia. In Transylvania a region was transferred from a higher civilization to a lower, and

**A Warring  
World**



I should in no way be sorry to see it go back to the Hungarians. But Yugoslavia is a true centre of freedom; and Greece—well, Greece is, I think a keystone on the chessboard. It is to be hoped that British action will foster the friendship with this one Balkan state which is European rather than Balkan. But Greece must be treated as an ally, not as a convenience.

Japan not unnaturally seeks to exploit England's difficulties and the women and children are evacuated from Hong Kong. That is a way of saying that England would fight if necessary. It is also notable that they are evacuated to American territory. It is not certain that Japan might not push the United States into action. A naval war, and a war against Japan, would look to the American public very different from intervention in Europe. Japan's manoeuvres may resolve themselves into an attempt at blackmail. But they add appreciably to Mr. Churchill's anxieties, which are probably as great as ever fell to the lot of any one man. Yet not too great for him. I have not known any man, I cannot easily imagine any man, whom I would rather see where he is today.

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Sir Herbert Grierson may not think so, but his new book appears at a lucky time. These *Essays and Addresses*\*, published or delivered at various times since 1923, come from the best mind that English criticism has possessed since W. P. Ker. **Good Criticism** Saintsbury had as much reading and as much bonhomie, but not the same balanced weight of authority. In these hectic times, anyone who loves letters can find rest and refreshment wherever Professor Grierson chooses to lead the discourse. Books may be the theme but he is never bookish, never loses touch with human issues; so for instance in an address delivered when a statue of Byron was presented to Aberdeen Grammar-school, he says that Aberdeen "does well to remind itself of ties with the larger world". Provinciality has its dangers as well as its advantages, and "American desertion of Europe after the close of the war" was largely due to "the provinciality of mind of the great mass of people incapable of seeing beyond the large yet narrow limits of their own material welfare, and prize-fights and political and industrial problems." That comes from one who has realized clearly that America—North and South—differs from Europe not as Asia does, but is a provincial extension of the European world.

Of course however the book is mostly concerned with letters, and naturally there is a good deal about Scott to whom so much of this critic's labour has been given. But he can make us look at Scott

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\*Chatto & Windus. 10s. 6d.

through Carlyle's distorting glasses and end by giving us a juster vision both of Scott and of Carlyle.—There are admirable *obiter dicta*; if anybody had said to me that Dr. Johnson was a more lovable figure than Sir Walter I should have protested, but a couple of Professor Grierson's sentences remind us that Scott was lured into the pursuit of money and squandered health and happiness in that chase; that Johnson was lazy to a fault, but had enough with which to be nobly charitable. This critic is very good on "The Later Wordsworth"; but indeed, when is he not good? except perhaps that in his lecture on "Lang, Lockhart and Biography" he does not face up to the fact that Lang's "Life of Lockhart" is a most disappointing work—with the obvious inference (since subject and author seemed ideally united) that Lang, in many ways so brilliant a writer, had no skill in building a book. But since the lecture was an annual commemoration of Andrew Lang, perhaps Sir Herbert Grierson did well to refrain from such commentary. His lecture on "Carlyle and Hitler" is notable for having singularly little to say about Hitler; but it was written in 1930. Certainly "the wreck of that industrial order which Carlyle imagined and of that democracy at which he scoffed" is no less apparent to-day. Would Carlyle accept Hitler for a hero? He might possibly be looking rather to Stalin, who seems on the whole more concerned to stand for "the cause of the poor in *Gottes und Teufels namen*" and also who talks a great deal less and has less of the demagogue in his dictatorship.

# THE FORTNIGHTLY LIBRARY

## SEA POWER

BY ADMIRAL SIR HERBERT RICHMOND

**SEA-POWER AND EMPIRE**, by F. C. J. Hearnshaw, *Harrap*. 10s. 6d.

**SEA POWER AND TO-DAY'S WAR**, by Fletcher Pratt, *Methuen*. 8s. 6d.

At a time when the fate of the world depends upon the command of the sea everything which appertains to sea-power is of peculiar and immediate importance. It never is superfluous to remind the citizens of the British Empire that the liberty and prosperity of its communities, living in islands scattered over the world, depends upon ability to control the only road open to them—the sea. It is with this aspect of sea-power that Professor Hearnshaw deals. He traces the rise of oceanic empires through their various stages of discovery, colonizing, proselytism, trading and the development of the fighting forces which protected the infant growths; the struggles in which in the centuries of expansion the countries became involved, and results of right and wrong uses of naval strength. His survey is not confined to naval wars. It touches also upon the many policies which informed colonial development, and brings out how little the present Empire owes its existence to any formulated “imperialism” on the part of British governments, or to the cause, so often asserted by foreign writers, of first provoking war between the peaceful

continental powers, and then playing the hyæna and seizing their oversea possessions. He carries his story down to last September, and includes reference to that series of deplorable treaties in which this country's ministers allowed it to be shorn of its defence. Clear and forcible, it is a book that deserves a prominent place in the educational establishments of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Pratt deals with another aspect of sea-power—the aspect of its material developments since the last war. He begins with the treaty of Washington which was optimistically believed by Mr. Charles M. Hughes to end naval competition for all time. Throughout those years the issues have been confused by political ambitions, by the idealisms recently castigated by Professor E. H. Carr, by false assumptions and conceptions of the nature of sea warfare. We have witnessed attempts to immunize food ships in war, to establish a differentiation between ships that are “offensive” and “defensive”, to settle the numbers of cruising vessels in an arbitrary manner without reference to the work they are required to perform. Though Mr. Pratt writes with an almost pontifical air of infallibility and is very critical of nations other than his own—he is an American—he makes some curious blunders and some hardly less curious strategical proposals. He



appears to be quite unaware of the principles governing the requirements in cruiser and flotilla strength, of the reasons for the construction of the Effingham class, of the small fighting capacity of the armed merchantman or the way in which battles come about in war. In pointing out what he believes to be the need for very large cruisers in the navy of the United States he observes that no British ship need ever be more than 800 miles from her base. A glance at the map of the Atlantic or the Pacific would have saved him from such a misstatement. Nevertheless, there is much of interest in his book, and not the least of it is in the picture it provides of the workings of the mind of a school of American thought.

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**THE WAR CRISIS IN BERLIN, JULY-AUGUST, 1914**, by Sir Horace Rumbold. *Constable*. 18s.

I sometimes have it in my heart to pity the historian who, in days to come, sits down to write the history of the Twentieth Century. He is likely to be overwhelmed by the wealth of the material at his command. Take only one episode of the century, the World War of 1914-1918. Hardly was the war ended before the several Governments of Europe, eager to vindicate themselves in the eyes of posterity, opened their archives and poured forth a flood of documents. More than 40,000 such documents demand the scrutiny of the future historian. Then there are the actors in the great drama: statesmen, soldiers, sailors, airmen, diplomatists, journalists—they are as anxious as the Governments to secure a verdict in favour of their policy and action, with the result

that our shelves already groan beneath the weight of their Memories, Reminiscences and Journals.

My first reaction, then, to Sir Horace Rumbold's book was not wholly sympathetic. But the more closely I study it—and it demands close study—the more I appreciate its value as an "authority". Sir Horace makes, indeed, free use of the various collections of documents already published and his citations, therefrom, are for the most part familiar to every student. Moreover, the book has its faults of technique. The "jacket" claims that the "writing is lucid, economical and judicial". The main economy I have observed is in the matter of dates. The day and month are given, but not infrequently even a reader fairly familiar with the facts, has to go back some pages to discover the year, and even then is obliged to infer it. Again, Sir Horace has an irritating habit of suddenly introducing characters without identification. Thus (p. 54) "Theodor Wolff recounts that Stumm told him", etc. Who is Stumm? Not until I reach p. 220 do I discover that "William Stumm was third in the hierarchy of the German Foreign Office". "Economy", then, is sometimes practised at the expense of "lucidity", and the ordinary reader is impelled to ask whether Sir Horace Rumbold is writing for him or only for the specialist.

Nevertheless, the more closely the book is read the more its value will be appreciated. Sir Horace Rumbold was Counsellor of Embassy at Berlin from December 1913 until the outbreak of war in August 1914. Of the 32 chapters 16 recount the events of the 16 days between Thursday, July 23, the day on which Austria-Hungary sent its ulti-

matum to Serbia, and Friday, August 7, the day on which Sir Horace and his colleagues of the British Embassy reached England.

This narrative given in great detail is of absorbing interest, and even in the midst of the still more exciting events of to-day, cannot fail to grip the attention of the least imaginative reader. The German statesmen, notably Bethmann-Holweg and Jagow, cut pitiable figures, but still more contemptible is the Austrian Chancellor Count Berchtold. To Grey's inexhaustible patience and his noble efforts to avert the catastrophe, Sir Horace pays a just tribute, nor can he, or anyone else withhold sympathy from Prince Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador in London.

To the main body of the book Sir Horace adds a copy of the Dispatch he wrote to the British Foreign Secretary on April 26, 1933. Sir Horace had returned to Berlin as Ambassador in 1928 and remained there until the summer of 1933. By that time Hitler was in a position of "unchallenged supremacy"; his "doctrine of force and hatred had already done its full work amongst the younger generation in Germany", and Sir Horace Rumbold was in a position to appreciate what his "gospel and philosophy . . . boded for Europe". A more penetrating analysis of the psychology of Hitler, a more accurate forecast of what his character and policy might portend for the world it would be difficult to find in current literature. "The spirit of the moment is" he wrote "definitely disquieting, and the Government of this country, for the first time since the war, are giving state sanction and encouragement to an attitude of mind,

as well as to various forms of military training, which can only end in one way".

What would one give to read Sir John Simon's reply to this remarkable Dispatch, and the "minutes" of his permanent officials thereon?

J. A. R. MARRIOTT.

**FAILURE OF A MISSION**, by Sir Nevile Henderson. *Hodder and Stoughton.* 7s. 6d.

**EUROPE'S DANCE OF DEATH**, by G. T. Garratt. *Allen and Unwin.* 10s. 6d.

I am glad that the station-master at Grantham brought Sir Nevile Henderson to the point and that *Failure of a Mission* was written. For it is of the greatest importance that we should have this first-hand account of events at Berlin from 1937 to 1939, from the tremendous occasions down to the truth about the "British babies" of the special train who were popularly believed to have scored a point against Hitler in May, 1938.

Throughout the book, however—can it be for the benefit of the station-master?—the naïveté of the Ambassador is really startling to anyone who has closely observed National Socialism over a longer period. It is an amiable English trait to believe what Germans say, but how does an Ambassador dare risk such credulity? Sir Nevile is, for instance, convinced that Hitler "restored to Germany her self-respect, and recreated orderliness out of the chaos and distress which had followed her defeat in 1918". In Weimar days Germany was exceedingly orderly with the exception of a few mainly Nazi outrages, while in Hitler's day the perpetrators of the outrages were

appointed to be the police, and the minority of decent Germans have been horribly ashamed of their country ever since. Sir Nevile also simplifies the Czech-German question out of all recognition; he accepts Nazi talk about the application to Bohemia of the Swiss control system although the latter has little to do with racial or language frontiers and Henlein's Carlsbad programme was therefore entirely incompatible with it. Finally, Sir Nevile fails to appreciate the truth of Masaryk's dictum that either three million Germans had to be subjected to a Slav authority or ten million Slavs to the Germans, since there was no workable alternative. As for Sir Nevile's weakness for the Göring family, I will not grudge him that; indeed one has the impression that on the whole he put it to good use. I cannot but admit that I find Monsieur Coulondre's excellent despatches from Berlin better reading than *Failure of a Mission*, yet Sir Nevile's is an honest confession and no mean achievement.

Mr. Garratt explains *Europe's Dance of Death* as "an attempt to show why Europe has drifted into the major war within a generation and why such principles as democracy and freedom have failed to prevent a general collapse of civilization in the Continent which had once led the world", but towards the end of the book he himself remarks that he has wandered far from its original object. *Europe's Dance of Death* gives a summarized account of the nineteenth century followed by a more detailed account of the first four decades of the twentieth. But there seems no very good reason for having retraced the footsteps of many greater writers unless as frank autobiography. Mr.

Garratt is able to refer to William II's Prince Bülow as a "wise and patient statesman"; this and other verdicts, which the available evidence does not seem to support, shake one's faith in the more admirable portions of the book. It also seems quite unjustifiable to declare that Hitler massed troops on the Czech frontier in May, 1938, at Mr. Chamberlain's instigation; incidentally, it is not uninteresting to compare the Henderson and the Garratt account of this affair, and it is a little difficult to be wholly convinced by either.

Mr. Garratt tells us that one motive for writing his book was the desire to keep "a more sane and balanced outlook in time of war". I must confess to being left with the impression that the appalling events we are to-day forced to witness can be at least partially explained by a lamentable combination of the naïveté of the responsible with the disgruntledness of the irresponsible in Great Britain in the last decade or so. It is not true, as Mr. Garratt would have us believe, that the wealthy classes were blinder than the others, for instance, to the decisive nature of Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland in March, 1936, the last opportunity, as Sir Nevile indicates, when the present war could have been decently prevented. Hitler's successes hitherto have been primarily due to his amazing singleness of purpose, and it is this quality which we in the West have lacked. Mr. Garratt's book is an eloquent proof of this weakness; he believes that it would be a colossal tragedy if world opinion . . . were to condemn both belligerents equally, yet he has provided American isolationism with all the material it could wish.

ELIZABETH WISKEMANN.



**NEMESIS ? The Story of Otto Strasser,**  
by Douglas Reed. *Cape.* 10s. 6d.

**THE ERRANT DIPLOMAT : A**  
**Biography of Franz von Papen,** by  
Oswald Dutch. *Arnold.* 12s. 6d.

For the politically anæmic who form the majority of this country Mr. Douglas Reed is a valuable astringent. His new medicine, though markedly inferior as a book, has the same tonic quality as *Insanity Fair*. And he is the only man writing about Germany to-day who succeeds in getting outside the conventional categories—who accepts the German Revolution as the touchstone of our times, comparable with the effect of 1789 in France, but realizes where it has run to waste and why. "German socialism", in the meaning of Otto Strasser (not Oswald Spengler), is, as he suggests, an irresistible current of our century—whereas Marxism is but the obverse of nineteenth-century Liberalism. Mr. Reed's message is, above all, for those who are anxious about the stick-in-the-mud leadership of Right and Left in the democracies (so-called)—who feel that "the world is in danger, from fear of the future, of falling back on the past".

Otto Strasser is an attractive figure who still commands the allegiance of millions of Germans. His Black Front, formed after the break with Hitler ten years ago (on July 4th, 1930), is the one solid thing on which an after-Hitler Germany could be built. ('Black', in this connection, means secret—as in the case of the Black Reichswehr, many of whom were Strasser's associates from the beginning). For the past eight years at least he has had a clear and coherent picture of a re-organized Germany; the Fourth Reich', reared on the pillars of Army

and Trade Unions but reflecting, above all, what Gregor Strasser, his ill-fated brother, described in his famous 1931 speech as the prodigious "anti-capitalist longing" of the German people. It is a Germany liberated from the Prussian jackboot, regionally administered in twelve or fifteen cantons, taking their shape from the distinctive Germanic peoples of the original Confederation, with some kind of guild or professional representation in place of the Parliamentary sham, and a social structure embodying State ownership but also the device of the "hereditary fief", i.e., the principle of usufruct with which we are familiar in law. Such a federated Germany as Strasser imagines could be fitted into a future European Union—that is the great point about it, from the point of view of the rest of the world. The details may not work out quite as Strasser expects, but at any rate it is a better and brighter prospect than the fanciful illusion of a restoration of the old agrarian and industrial autocracy—"the Göring racket", of which the author writes :

And this is the greatest danger, as I think, in this war; that our rulers, though disillusioned about Hitler, will seek to establish a régime of men as much like themselves as possible, without regard for the longing that exists in men's souls for a better, a juster and a stable order—a longing that in perpetual disappointment leads to desperation and anarchy.

Mr. Reed gives us full measure of the details of Otto Strasser's hairsbreadth escapes from the clutches of the Gestapo as well as a critical commentary on the ideas outlined above.

Those of us who knew the Germany of the early thirties may reflect ruefully how near the Strasser conception of national socialism was to fruition. That Hitler 'ratted' at the last moment

was directly due to an act of interception by Messrs. Göering and Goebbels. But perhaps the most sinister influence of those years was the egregious von Papen, whose amazing career of slippery intrigue has now found a biographer in Mr. Oswald Dutch. Stirrup-holder for Hitler, then his jackal, this gentleman-jockey (as he once was) is from all accounts—including this one—an unpleasant customer, gifted, however, with inordinate charm and a really rubber-like capacity to bounce. Mr. Dutch traces his progress through the period as Military Attaché in Washington, when he left incriminating papers in his luggage apprehended at Falmouth, the spell of active service in Palestine when he left behind other documents of a similar nature in making a hurried escape from the British forces, through the brief springtime of the Herrenklub, the two years as the white-headed boy of President Hindenburg, which included the Chancellorship of the Reich, through the period of discomfiture which followed, and finally the phase as envoy of mischief in Vienna and Ankara.

W. HORSFALL CARTER.

**TEN LEAN YEARS**, by Wal Hannington. *Gollancz. 7s. 6d.*

**UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE UNEMPLOYED**, by H. W. Singer. *P. S. King. 8s. 6d.*

**WATLING**, by Ruth Durant. *P. S. King. 9s.*

Mr. Hannington has a vigorous mind and a vigorous pen. His book *Ten Lean Years* is an examination of the National Government's record in the field of unemployment and it is not surprising that Mr. Hannington finds the National Government guilty on all

counts. As usual Mr. Hannington would have us believe that the hated heads of a capitalistic society, symbolized by National Government leaders and complacent back benchers, spend their leisure hours scheming how they may get more for less out of the poor. But the fact that this is not actually so does not excuse the actions of successive administrations. Politicians, parties and people will stand in the dock of history for their attitude towards unemployment during the years between the wars and as long as they stand there the verdict will be the same.

As prosecuting counsel Mr. Hannington makes an overwhelming case. He has sense enough to realize that the jury will not accept his word alone and he supports every statement with ample illustration. The findings of the Royal Commission in 1932 and the support they and the Act of 1934 received on the grounds of necessary economy represent the high water mark of hypocrisy reached in this country's social legislation. If this be denied let it be explained how so much money was available for the prosecution of the war in 1939. There can be no talk of equal burdens while economy for some means the halving of luxuries and for others existence below the poverty line. Anyone who disagrees should take Mr. Hannington's book and try to answer it page by page.

Unlike *Ten Lean Years*, Dr. Singer's volume *Unemployment and the Unemployed* is most irritating. Dr. Singer's sympathies lie in the right direction and his aim is to instruct to a somewhat better point of view all those who regard the unemployed as a race apart. Unfortunately these are just the people who are unlikely to read his book and

the rest of us would have preferred Dr. Singer's views in a less playful form. The difficulty for Dr. Singer is to escape from the fetters of what he calls the "articulate class" and he presumably accepts the social system which has countenanced unemployment while seeking to amend its methods of treating with the problem.

The book has its good points. Dr. Singer gives a clear summary of the various frictional causes of unemployment and he brings out well the isolation of the unemployed in the prosperous areas, as well as the fact that the skilled man feels unemployment more keenly than the unskilled man owing to a much bigger drop in his standard of living. He shows, too, how this fact makes the lot of the older skilled man, who is unemployed and unlikely to find work, almost unbearable. But these points have been well illustrated before, notably in *Men Without Work*, with the production of which Dr. Singer was closely concerned.

Mrs. Durant's survey of the new housing estate at Watling will be more valuable as evidence when further surveys of a similar nature have been carried out. At the moment it would appear that the attempt to establish a communal life, though far from successful, led to a better spirit than exists in other suburban areas. Some of the mistakes, such as the site and the size of the building, made in establishing a Centre could be overcome and it would be a useful experiment if something could be done on the line of the Peckham Health Centre, now alas out of action, making the family the unit of membership and the leisure of the mothers a first consideration.

JOHN ARMITAGE.

WALES ENGLAND WED, by Ernest Rhys. *Dent*. 15s.

Happy in the opportunity of his birth, Mr. Ernest Rhys came to maturity in the interesting years that ended last century. Between the two Jubilees of Queen Victoria—1887 and 1897, or a little earlier and a little later—this country enjoyed a second Renaissance, a period of intense intellectual and social awakening. Some people scowled at our "decadence", and sneered at the "*fin de siècle*." No matter! A new life was opening to us, full of fresh interests and mental or economic excitements. It was a true and violent revolution of mind and existence, a revival of beauty and a courageous criticism of habits. We had many glorious leaders: Ruskin and William Morris in both spheres; Hyndman, Edward Carpenter, Kropotkin, Bernard Shaw and the other Fabians mainly on the economic side; and the memories of Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, and Pater to encourage us forward. It was a glorious, inspiring time, and Ernest Rhys had the advantage of living right in the midst of it, young and full of the widespread desires and hopes.

One of the most stirring movements of those happy days was certainly the "Celtic Revival," and it was with the Welsh side of that movement that his name was most closely connected. He did for the Welsh what Willie Yeats, George Russell ("A.E."), and Douglas Hyde did for the Irish. He was born in Islington, but his father was Welsh and his childhood was passed at Carmarthen in a romantic old Welsh bishop's palace. He spoke Welsh and was full of the thoughts that once created the Welsh legends and ballads. His spirit has always been tinged with



the Celtic love of mountains and romantic solitudes. He tells us of his want of memory and his disregard for money, but I have never noticed those two characteristics in the Welsh people, so that perhaps they are due to his mother, a Hertfordshire girl. In his poems and his other works the Welsh tendency is usually obvious, and in his life we find the Celtic longing for the open sky, the wilderness, and the wanderer's staff. Even when regular work compelled him to live in London, married and with children, he was repeatedly changing his home, and to this day I find it hard to catch him. He is still "a wandering voice."

But the hard necessity of life has often tied him down. To look at him or to know him, one would never conjecture that in early manhood he worked as "viewer" in a Durham coal-pit. He tells two terrible scenes of the life down in that grimy darkness—one of an explosion, and one of a poor thoroughbred mare who, in her yearning for light and air, dashed along the low and narrow galleries among the pit-props till she killed herself in despair. Perhaps the hard reality of such a life saved Rhys from the fantasies of his early times, as he has been saved by his Celtic blood from the "modernist" or formless so-called verse which is neither simple nor sensuous nor passionate, but is utterly contrary to Milton's definition of poetry. One may notice too that near his pit-head he founded a pitman's library, and so served his apprenticeship for that "Everyman's Library" with which his name is so closely bound up. His work for that vast library, reaching up to 1,000 volumes now, was tedious and often harassing, for old J. M. Dent, in spite of his genuine love of literature,

was not an easy taskmaster. A quotation proves the difficulty :—

"You writers", he said, "enjoy your writing, and do not need to be paid, but I sit grinding away all day, with all the trouble and none of the pleasure."

But his own writings and the Library brought Ernest Rhys into contact with all the best-known writers of the time. I set about making a list of the most distinguished men and women of letters whom he has known. But the mere list without his comments would have filled a column, and so I must leave it. Of his many excellent anecdotes I can quote but one :—

"Dr. Richard Garnett (the famous librarian of the British Museum) was once asked by an engaging lady if she could have all the works of Jesus Christ."

If only the answer could have been Yes !

I must omit the numerous wanderings of this wandering voice—to Ireland, the United States, Italy, France, Teneriffe, and many other places. The whole story is told with minute simplicity and an accuracy that seldom fails. It is the record of a courageous and on the whole an enviable life.

HENRY W. NEVINSON.

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**EUROPE TO LET**, by Storm Jameson.  
*Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

**DUTCH INTERIOR**, by Frank O'Connor.  
*Macmillan.* 7s. 6d.

While the din of propaganda fills the air Miss Jameson dares to raise her voice. Does she really hope to be heard ?

Her four pictures, complete in themselves, form a sickening complement to each other. Here is the Germany of 1923 with the gentle Kurt Hesse saying : "We never grow up. We're lawless, cringing, dreaming by turns,

and charming like children, until the moment comes when, as nurses say, we 'get past ourselves'. Then you begin to hate us. But you don't think of helping us. You punish us. One of these days no doubt we shall set fire to the house . . . how you will hate us then. And how in our hearts we shall blame you for leaving us to play with matches in an icily cold room." And to a fellow countryman—"What do you hope for the future of Germany now that the Germans have begun killing each other?" There is the Austria of 1938, after four months of German occupation where, in Vienna, "there was nowhere to go, since a self-respecting foreigner, not a Jew, could not enter picture galleries and museums bearing the notice *Jews not wanted*, lest by doing so he threw away his birthright as a civilized European". Here, too, is the Prague of 1938 when "the Czechs had just capitulated to the governments of France, Germany, England and Poland. It was the first time since the war that the four had acted together; the sheets were turned down for a united Europe, and it was only an accident that brought about the death, overlain, of a charming healthy child." And listen to Stehlik, the Czech—"London bankers and business men are saying—"There will be no war for Czechoslovakia because we are going to stop it". How? By threatening the Germans? Not on your sweet life. By threatening *us*!" Or the Englishman talking to the Czechs—"You've taught yourselves to behave rationally—it was a fatal mistake. If you were to rave, goose-step, spend millions on propaganda, we should be sweating to understand you." There are a hundred observations as good, or as bad, as these.

The last pages deal with the Hungary of 1938, her bewilderment and fear. The sweetness of Tihaneth (probably a deliberate reminder of the Hesse of the first part) helps one to finish this painful book. Such infrequent rays of light penetrate the blackness and make it bearable. Thus the horror of the story of Emil Wolf, the Jewish surgeon with clever hands hacked and twisted into stumps by the Nazis, finds a counterbalance later on in the delightful episode of the schoolboy and his lavender.

Miss Storm Jameson has built the framework of this novel with all her usual skill. As always, her foundation is firm (remember how she added a couple of storeys to *The Lovely Ship* and kept her structure strong and true?) but she is grief-stricken here and her material is unpromising. Europe can only be let to happy and peaceful tenants when each individual in it has learnt at last to be unselfish.

It is not merely because theme and setting are different that the second book is a contrast. This, too, has a series of pictures, but they are neither complete nor complementary. As a short story writer Frank O'Connor has proved himself. And if he had not treated *Dutch Interior* as a novel the Daltons, the Devanes and the Maddens might have had a chance to emerge recognizably. On closing the book it is already difficult to sort them out. Was Dalton or Devane the music lover? Whose was that mean ogre of a father or whose those tiresome clocks? And as for the beautiful Miss Maddens—well, the jacket says there were three. Yet his people really live; they move about their noisy town and their Irishness is never so overdone that they fail



to resemble other human beings. But, so lopped off and chopped up are they that they are a good deal less likeable than they need be and it is hard work to get interested in their hopes and fears. And so one feels that while the writing may be worth persevering with the people are not—surely an odd state of mind to bring away from the reading of a novel.

Mr. O'Connor has a beautiful economy of dialogue and often shows a gloriously oblique sense of humour. Is making a few words go a long way becoming an end in itself, or does he allow obscurity to dim his powers as a storyteller just for fun?

GEA MORRIS.

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**ENGLISH HISTORY IN ENGLISH FICTION**, by Sir John Marriott.  
*Blackie. 8s. 6d.*

In a book which the author describes as "confessedly an adventure", Sir John Marriott has discussed at length the part that can and should be played by historical fiction as a handmaid to the sterner study of history. Until the time of Macaulay, as Sir John points out, it did not appear to be the wish, far less the duty, of an historian to treat of those minor points of interest—such as houses and furniture, attire, food and drink, and social habits—which are now to be found very rightly even in the schoolboy's history book. The novelist, following in the footsteps of the Wizard of the North, is not only as interested in these matters as the social historian, but is able to treat them with a greater licence and thus perhaps stimulates in the reader a greater desire for knowledge. In the nature of things a good novelist will always be able to treat these points

more pictorially than the strict historian, and it can be confirmed by all teachers of history that the pictorial method is the first step towards inspiring an absorbing interest in pupils; one visit to a Roman villa or a monument of history such as Windsor Castle will do more than several class-room lessons. These methods which are prevalent to-day may be in a sense paralleled by the encouragement which is given to the reading of historical novels; in neither case is the method successful or worth pursuing unless the stimulus given to the imagination is such that the student will be driven to desire further information from the real historian. If this should be the result, the teacher will surely be said to have vindicated his method and incidentally the value of the Historical Novel. It is what Sir John calls "the supreme test" and it is the purpose of this book to give short accounts of chosen novels in historical order in the hope that those who read the books will turn to the authorities also. The book treats specifically of English Fiction and of English History; a far larger volume would have been necessary to treat also of Scottish history, especially when the number of Sir Walter Scott's books alone is taken into consideration. Those of the Waverley novels which treat of English history are brought within the scope of the present work, and there would seem room for other books on the same lines treating of Scottish history and of Foreign history. There are two valuable appendices. The second contains a list of over three hundred novels mentioned in the text—a very representative list, though it is strange to find no book of Margaret Irwin included: the other gives a short list of useful books, including the best authorities. The whole



book is done with Sir John Marriott's usual thoroughness, and should prove especially valuable to school librarians; general readers who have a taste for the historical will also find it of great interest.

J. F. BURNET.

**RUDYARD KIPLING**, by Edward Shanks. *Macmillan*. 7s. 6d.

Four years have passed since the death of Rudyard Kipling, but time has not silenced the voices of detraction. One such lately dismissed his poetry as "jingling doggerel", a reproach only applicable to a modicum of it. The argument started with the appearance in the 'Nineties' of *Barrack-Room Ballads*. I remember Robert Bridges quoting "We winked at 'Omer down the road, and 'Omer 'e winked back at us", and remarking with asperity that to call such stuff poetry

was "absurd. But it is a far cry from that awful example to *The way through the woods*, or *Recessional*, or the poems like flowers in the grass, which enhance the charm of the stories in (for instance) *Rewards and Fairies*. These verses, if "occasional", are often exquisite and always telling. They are neither "jingling" nor "doggerel".

But since in nine-tenths of his work prose is Kipling's medium, his prose works must take priority. Mr. Shanks has subjected them to a searching but conspicuously fair-minded scrutiny. Not the easiest part of his task lay in tracing the influence upon them of their author's political creed; hence the book's sub-title, "A study in literature and political ideas".

Kipling, first and foremost, was an artist in words; but he did not let that interfere with insistence on his favourite political tenets. It followed that he

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often gave many readers as much offence as pleasure, or more. He seems not to have cared for the society of literary men or of politicians. He would not, Mr. Shanks tells us, accept recognition from any government, lest afterwards he should feel obliged to attack it. He preferred to associate with people who were good at their job, and willing to take risks without flinching. A master of many techniques, with almost an adoration for machinery, in some of his later stories he becomes to those who are not technicians nearly unintelligible. But consider (with Mr. Shanks as guide) the extent and variety of the ground he covered. Starting with flashlights on life in India, both white and brown, he passed, after a

false start or two, to totally new themes. He fell in love, in his maturity, with England. The author of *Plain Tales* became the wizard whose wand made periods and personalities of English history live anew for thousands. A very Puck of letters, he evoked the figures of Queen Elizabeth, Wellington, "Boney", Talleyrand and a host of others who shared in the making and modification of our race. He was as much at home with them as with Kim in the Himalayas or Mowgli in the jungle. These were the creations with which his golden years (in Mr. Shanks' happy phrase) were gloriously and diversely starred.

H. C. MINCHIN.

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## CORRESPONDENCE

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